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OF THE
TWENTY-FIVE ARTICLES OF RELIGION
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HENRY WHEELER

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Methodist Episcopal Church

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By
HENRY WHEELER, D.D.

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NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
CINCINNATI: JENNINGS & GRAHAM

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TO THE
MINISTRY AND MEMBERSHIP
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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PREFACE

A ministry of fifty years in the Methodist Episcopal Church has convinced the writer of the need, both by ministry and people, of a history and exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion. Only two volumes of explanatory notes on the subject have ever been published, and these—one by the Rev. Silas Comfort, D.D., and one by the Rev. A. A. Jameson, M.D.—issued many years ago, are long since out of print.

The younger element in Methodism to-day is marked by an especial spirit of inquiry, and to meet this a treatise on the Articles of the denomination is a desideratum in Methodist literature. This work is not intended to be a system of theology. The subjects discussed are limited to those suggested by the Articles; these subjects are illustrated and confirmed by quotations from Methodist authorities in scholarship and doctrine.

The Articles which form the foundation stones of Protestantism are not alone negative pronouncements antagonistic to priestly error and superstition, but they are crystallized statements of truth, the final outcome of centuries of protest and unrest. They were formed in the fierce heat of ancient controversies; they are not obsolete, as the errors condemned are as much alive to-day as when Luther faced the Diet of Worms, or

as when Cranmer and Ridley died at the stake. Error has lost its power, but not its subtlety.

For assistance in the preparation of this volume acknowledgment is due to many friends, particularly to Professor Robert W. Rogers, D.D., Ph.D., of Drew Theological Seminary; to the Rev. J. Byrchmore, Vicar of Barton St. David's, Somersetshire, England, through whom I received valuable manuscript notes of eminent English divines, and to my son, George Post Wheeler, Litt.D.

HENRY WHEELER.

Ocean Grove, N. J.

INTRODUCTION

Ideas are very potent in this world. Philosophers tell us that one dominant idea was the basal influence in the development in each of the ancient kingdoms of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The idea of life in Egypt, of physical perfection in Greece, and of law in Rome shaped their development and limited their achievements. Since they all had limits, wide development must cease and achievement come to an end.

If one would know the United States he must study its Constitution, read its purpose in its preamble, which says, "We, *the people*, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution." The people alone are considered, and every good sought is common. To know the United States one must see the outreaching influence of that Constitution by its being closely copied in republics of the whole of South America; see how it has influenced, if not determined, the facts that in Europe governments have been liberalized, constitutions granted, elective franchises given or extended, and a two-branched house of legislation established in Norway and Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, France, Italy, the German Empire, and even Austria, between 1807 and 1871.

So, if one would understand the Methodist Episcopal Church, he must seek with loving devotion to understand the ideas and polity that have inspired the millions of

its members on earth, and those now in heaven, to lofty living, sublime sacrifice, and to doing so much to make the kingdoms of the world to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. These ideas are found tersely expressed in the Twenty-five Articles of Religion, twenty-four of which were written by Mr. Wesley for the new Church in America. They were slightly modified and adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church at the Christmas Conference of 1784. Another Article, the twenty-third, expressing the allegiance of the Church to the United States as a "sovereign and independent nation that ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction," was adopted as early as 1804. Except for slight verbal changes, often merely corrections of misprints in successive editions of the Discipline, these Articles remain as first adopted. They were so broad and liberal, so fundamental to the Christian life and the life of the Church, that they have needed little or no modification. And the General Conference of 1832 took it out of the power of the Church to "revoke, alter, or change" them.

The laws of the material universe are unchangeable, why not those of the spiritual? Gravitation is not variable, spasmodic, nor intermittent. Neither the Ten Commandments nor the Eleventh are subject to legislative abolishment, nor amendment by any Council or Synod.

These Twenty-five Articles are not the result of any one man's thinking, dashed off in a moment of supposed divine afflatus, any more than was the American Constitution, of which Mr. Gladstone said, "It is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." As the Constitution was the result of all the ages of human instinct, deep thinking, and heroic daring for freedom and human rights, so the Articles are the pure gold refined from

crude ore of all the ages. Into the furnace went the three great creeds, Apostolic, Athanasian, and Nicene, the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the creeds of many minds and eras, and out of them all came the creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Neither the Constitution of Church nor State needs further amendment. Such a product is well worthy of study both as to its genesis and its far-reaching results.

Dr. Wheeler is eminently qualified to be a safe and interesting guide in such a study. He has had long experience in administering churches that are the outgrowth of these principles. He has written much and interestingly on kindred themes; his style is lucid and easy. There are no greater themes than those discussed in these chapters. It is said to be equal to a liberal education to live with some men. It is certainly ennobling to live with such themes.

An introduction of one person to another is one of the least of the courtesies of life. It is comprehended in a phrase or sentence, but its results may be a lifelong joy in friendship, and even a mutual everlasting love. With large hope of like results, I am happy to introduce my readers to the History and Exposition of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by Henry Wheeler.

HENRY W. WARREN.

PRELIMINARY

Sufficient reason can be assigned for the adoption of Articles of Religion by any organized body of Christian believers, and with few exceptions every denomination has formulated some definite statement of what it believes essential to Christian development and salvation.

At the time of the Reformation under Luther it became necessary to show to the world valid reasons for separating from the Church of Rome, which had dominated the Christian world for centuries and arrogated to itself supreme authority over all things spiritual. If good reasons could not be shown for withdrawing from that Church the Reformers must be branded as schismatics, guilty of rending asunder the Church of Christ, and hence be sinners in the sight of God. By such articles they could enter a protest against errors in the Church from which they withdrew.

In a period of religious excitement extravagant notions prevail, and at the time of the Reformation its enemies attributed all inconsistencies and extravagances to its leaders. The leaders themselves could not agree, the Swiss being more radical than the Germans. Luther desired to retain in the Church all doctrines and rites not at variance with the express words of Scripture. Zwingli resolved to be rid of everything not maintained by direct appeal to the Word of God.

For these reasons the German divines, to guard themselves against the radical measures of the Swiss and the calumnies of their enemies, prepared that Confession of their faith which they offered to the Diet at Augsburg, and which bears the name of that city.

THE CONFESSION OF AUGSBURG

This states the doctrines held by the German Protestants as distinguished from those of the Romanists and the Zwinglians. It was designed to serve as a basis of united action by the German Reformers and princes. It was drawn up by Melancthon, revised by Luther, and presented to Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. It contains twenty-eight Articles—twenty-one on questions of doctrine and seven on ecclesiastical abuses.

The reformers of the state of Würtemberg twenty-two years later, desiring a separate formula of their own, framed what is known as

THE CONFESSION OF WÜRTEMBERG

This is a Lutheran document containing thirty-five Articles, and framed on the Augsburg model. It was presented to the Council of Trent by the ambassadors of the state of Würtemberg in 1552.

The same reasons that the Germans had for formulating the Augsburg Confession the English had for the issuance of Articles for the Church of England. The English Reformers were grossly misrepresented by the Romanists, who for a long time were very numerous and very strong in both government and Church. So long as no definite form of faith was prepared to which the clergy were obliged to subscribe it was hard to distinguish friend from foe. The English Reformation surged back and forth, like the tides of the ocean, the king, Henry VIII, sometimes favoring and sometimes opposing the Reformers and their attempts at reformation.

During the reign of Henry VIII the first English formula appeared. It was known as

THE TEN ARTICLES OF 1536

These were prepared by the Convocation, the king's prime minister, Cromwell, having conveyed to that body the wish of the sovereign that all controversies should cease, by the "determination of you and of his whole Parliament." They consisted of five Articles on doctrine and five on the laudable ceremonies used in the Church.

In 1538 a select number of Lutheran divines were invited by King Henry VIII to come to England and confer with the English Reformers with a view to a union of Anglicans and Lutherans in one communion. Conferences were held, with Archbishop Cranmer presiding, and a formula was produced which is known as

THE THIRTEEN ARTICLES OF 1538

The conferring divines found it easy to agree on points of doctrine, but could not agree on questions of discipline. The Germans returned home and nothing permanent was accomplished. The Articles were not submitted to Convocation or made public at that time. They are historically important because they were used in the preparation of the Forty-two Articles, from which the Thirty-nine were afterward framed.

In 1553 a new series of Articles was drafted by Archbishop Cranmer, and submitted to other bishops for approval and suggestion. They were later returned to Cranmer for "the last correction of his pen and judgment." On June 19 of this year they were published, and a mandate was issued in the name of Edward VI requiring subscription from all clergy, schoolmasters, and members of the University on admission to degrees. These are called

THE FORTY-TWO ARTICLES OF 1553

These were the result of frequent consultation between the leading Reformers. Such a formula had been expected for a long time. The royal order for the printing of them was given on the twentieth of May, 1553, and excited the hopes of the friends of reform. But this, like many other of the salutary fruits that ripened in the reign of King Edward, was soon to be buried under the force of the reaction occasioned by his death and the accession of Queen Mary. The achievements won in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI were largely lost in the reign of this queen. The principal actors in the Reformation were led to the stake. Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and many others won the crown of martyrdom. In those stormy times passion and bigotry rather than reason and righteousness ruled on both sides.

During the five-year reign of Mary the Forty-two Articles, known as the Edwardian Articles, dropped out of sight. But in 1558 Elizabeth ascended the throne and Protestantism breathed more freely. In the year 1562 Convocation met and a revision of the Forty-two Articles was undertaken with a view to their revival in a modified form. This resulted in

THE THIRTY-EIGHT ARTICLES OF 1562

This revision was a most important one. After various additions, omissions, and other changes, this new series was published under the direct authority of Queen Elizabeth, during whose long reign the Reformation prospered.

In the interval between 1562 and 1571 the Articles were considered by the bishops and the queen. Various changes and additions were contemplated. The queen

had refused to submit the Articles to Parliament, and the general clergy (many of whom were still attached to Rome) were not required to subscribe to them. In 1570 the papal bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth was issued. This completed the separation of the Anglican Church from Rome. Immediately after this Parliament passed a law requiring that all the clergy who had been ordained during the reign of Mary, and all candidates for future ordination, should subscribe to the Articles. After their subscription the Articles were again revised and submitted to the queen "to peruse them and judge them," and the result was

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF 1571

These were published with the royal ratification and the assent of Convocation. This was the final revision, and the Articles are now found in the Book of Common Prayer.

The English Articles in their earliest form were the product of many bishops and divines. As the Roman Catholic Church contained all that was positive in Christian doctrine, the English Reformers found it difficult to prepare Articles which simply denied teachings of that Church contrary to the Word of God; they therefore adopted, as a foundation, an Article declaring that the whole doctrine of the Christian religion is contained in the Scriptures, and that therefore they would admit no Article till it had been proved from Scripture.

The Articles were not the work of any one eminent theologian; were not devised by any Council, Conference, or Convocation. They were a growth, a development calculated to meet and resist errors that had arisen in the Church of Christ in different centuries. They mark the struggles of the Church to arrive at a clear and

correct definition of truth, to emerge from error and guard herself against inroads of dangerous heresies. They bear the marks of many minds. For foundation they go back to Christ and the apostles, since every positive assertion of doctrine must be founded upon God's Word and every negative declaration must be justified by the same infallible rule.

Assent or subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles is imposed upon all who seek orders in the Anglican Church, but not upon the laity. They profess to be a formula "for the avoiding of diversities of opinion" in the public teaching of the clergy. It is well known, however, that there is a great diversity of opinion and doctrine taught. Dr. Döllinger says: "The divergence of views between different parties in this Church is greater than any which separates it from the Greek and Latin Churches, if the three are to be judged by their formal standards."¹ It is divided into three great parties: the Evangelical or Low Church, the Broad Church, and the High Church or Anglo-Catholic. The first is Calvinistic, the second is deeply tinged with German philosophical and theological thought, the third is ritualistic, discarding the name of Protestant. This latter party regards the Church as the divinely appointed organ and keeper of doctrine and the means of grace, and as standing or falling by the apostolical succession.²

¹Lecture on Reunion of Churches, p. 130.

²It may seem strange that good and intelligent men of such widely different views could conscientiously subscribe to the same Articles of Religion. The learned Dr. William Paley, a celebrated divine of the English Church, takes a broad view of assent by the clergy: "They who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them must suppose that the legislature expected the consent of ten thousand men, and that in perpetual succession, not to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any who observed the incurable perversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration.

"If the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend?

"They intended to exclude from offices in the Church,

"I. All abettors of popery.

"II. Anabaptists, who were at that time a powerful party on the Continent.

"III. The Puritans, who were hostile to an Episcopal constitution; and, in

The Wesleyan movement was met by the same spirit of persecution that attended the leaders of the Reformation. Wesley and all associated with him were opposed, misrepresented, and maligned. They were bitterly persecuted in many ways. They were brought before magistrates, fined and imprisoned on various pretenses. They suffered physical violence and took "joyfully the spoiling of their goods." The mobs that opposed them were often led by the gentry, sometimes by the parish clergyman. But the most distressing persecution to bear was the misrepresentation of character, of motive, and of doctrine, not only by the people, but by clergymen of every grade from parish curate to bishop. They were labeled a people "of sanctified singularities, low fooleries, and high pretensions." Their preachers were pointed to as "strolling predicants of affected phrases, fantastic and unintelligible notions, whimsical strictnesses, and loud exclamations." They were called "papists," "innocent madmen," or "infamous cheats." They were charged with "the black art of calumny, with excessive pride and vanity, with skepticisms and disbeliefs of God and Christ, with disorderly practices and inveterate broils among themselves, and with a coolness for good works and an uncommon warmth for some that are very bad."¹ The spirit of persecution and misrepresentation followed them everywhere in England and also in the colonies.

The English Methodists, however, during Wesley's life, made no declaration of separation. They were regarded as in close affiliation with, if not members of,

general, the members of such leading sects or foreign establishments as threatened to overthrow our own.

"Whoever finds himself comprehended within these descriptions ought not to subscribe. Nor can a subscriber to the Articles take advantage of any latitude which our rule may seem to allow, who is not first convinced that he is truly and substantially satisfying the intention of the legislature."—*Principles of Philosophy*, chap. xxii.

¹See Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. ii, p. 150.

the Church of England. They were not then organized into an independent denomination or recognized as such, but were societies formed within the sphere of the English Church. The Thirty-nine Articles were still the symbols of their faith. The Methodists of the American colonies also stood in this relation, under the authority of John Wesley, and the rules of the English Methodists governed also the societies in America.

But when the colonies became independent states, and the English government and Church had no further jurisdiction over them, the American societies organized themselves into an independent Church under the advice and direction of Wesley, who prepared for it by the ordination of deacons, elders, and a superintendent or bishop. The organization was effected at a Conference held in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, Maryland, from December 24, 1784, to January 2, 1785. The Minutes of the Conference of 1785 says, "We formed ourselves into an independent Church; and following the advice of Mr. John Wesley, who recommended the episcopal mode of Church government, we thought it best to become an episcopal Church making the episcopal office elective, and the elected superintendent, or bishop, amenable to the body of ministers and preachers." It then became necessary to formulate some symbols of their faith, or to adopt some already formed, and thus show to the world the tenets to which they adhered. Mr. Wesley had anticipated this by the preparation of an abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. These he reduced to twenty-four and sent them by Dr. Coke, whom he had consecrated as superintendent of the societies in America. To these the Conference added one, "Of the Rulers of the United States of America." The whole was then adopted by the newly

formed Church at the time of its organization. These are

THE TWENTY-FIVE ARTICLES

They are not to be considered a formal creed. Wesley evidently designed them to be the barest possible symbol of expedient doctrine, and not even a requisite condition of Church membership. "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.'"¹

The Notes on the New Testament, and the first fifty-three² sermons in Volume II of Wesley's Works published in New York, and the Minutes, were the doctrinal standards of English and American Methodism.

In addition to these the Twenty-five Articles of Religion were accepted as one of the standards of doctrine; and belief in them was a prerequisite qualification for the ministry. They were originally printed in the Sunday Service with a liturgy and a collection of psalms and hymns. They were published in the Discipline of 1788, immediately following the General Rules; so also in 1789. In 1790 they were numbered as section XXXV; in 1792 they were section II, immediately following the statement of the origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church; they now stand as the first division of the Constitution of the Church.

The bishops, Coke and Asbury, in the address prefixed to the Discipline of 1789, said: "We wish to see this little publication in the house of every Methodist, and the more so as it contains . . . the Articles of Religion, maintained, more or less, in part or in the whole, by every reformed Church in the world."

¹ General Rules of 1788.

² This number has been challenged. See *Christian Advocate*, April 18, 1907, article by Dr. R. J. Cooke.

They have been kept without change by the Restrictive Rule adopted in 1808: "The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, nor change our Articles of Religion, nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine."

From 1808 to 1832 this rule was subject to change by the same method as the others, but the General Conference of the latter year made it unchangeable by any method. In this form it passed into the new Constitution adopted by the General Conference of 1900, and came into force May 6, 1902, by proclamation of the bishops.

Prior to 1864, candidates for full membership in the Church were examined by the pastor, and were required to give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their faith and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church. The method of examination was discretionary with the pastor, and the declaration of faith was general rather than specific.

In 1864 a "Form for Receiving Persons into the Church" was adopted. Then for the first time in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church a formal declaration of faith was required:

"Do you believe in the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures as set forth in the Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church?

"Ans. I do."

This answer implies more than a superficial knowledge of the Articles. They should be read with close attention. They are not obsolete, they emphasize truths that are unchangeable and eternal; they protest against errors that are as prevalent to-day as they ever have been—errors that curse the earth and darken the homes of

millions of our fellow men; errors that bewilder the intellects and burden the consciences of vast multitudes. They were prepared by men who had lived under the power of the Roman hierarchy, but had broken from the tyranny and found liberty in the truth of God.

Whatever restatement of our faith may be made, it cannot set aside the Twenty-five Articles. They are the result of mighty conflicts of the Church with gigantic systems of error, the growth of many centuries, intrenched in the minds and hearts of men through many generations. They are monuments that mark the place of battle, and the principles contended for. They contain statements of truth that crystallized amid the fires of bitter persecution. Some of the men who gave utterance to them won the crown of martyrdom, and the hand that wrote them perished in the flames. The Articles of Religion and our Ritual are two important links in the chain that binds the Methodist Episcopal Church to the great historic Church of past ages.

The concise and simple character of our Articles of Religion has contributed to the stability of Methodism and to its freedom from theological heresy. Divisions have come from various causes, but none from theological disturbances. Methodism has proclaimed the most liberal offers of mercy, while it has faithfully denounced the wrath of God against all unrighteousness. It has been composed largely of the common people, and has preserved them from theological aberrations. Its ministry has had fewer advantages of scholarly culture than any other, and yet no other has brought less heretical scandal upon the faith delivered to the saints.

These and kindred facts have been pointed out by Dr. Abel Stevens, who assigns two reasons for them:

"One is the character of our theological standards—in

England, Wesley's Sermons, with a liberal right of interpreting them; in America, Wesley's Abridgment of the Anglican Articles, reduced to the most simple and most essential postulates of religious belief. . . . There are few, if any, devout minds which do not pass through crises, and sometimes profound struggles of opinion; the best creed is not that which, by presenting the minutest dogmatic demands, presents to such minds proportional provocations to dissent, but that which, waiving minute subtleties, holds out the great, essential, steady lights which can guide the earnest but wavering soul, holds them out with earnest but indulgent sympathy. Such, we think, is the creed of Methodism, and such one of its securities against heterodoxy.

"But there has been another and more important protection to its theology. *It has aimed more to ascertain and promote the spiritual life than the theological ideas of its people.* Whether consciously or not, it has thus given an example of the best philosophy of religious orthodoxy. Most sects have seemed to assume that orthodoxy must secure the spiritual life of the Church; Methodism has, practically at least, assumed that evangelical life will secure evangelical orthodoxy. 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God' (John 7. 17)."¹

Some persons object to the adoption of Articles of Faith upon the following grounds, namely: that they infringe Christian liberty, and supersede the Scriptures by substituting in their place a number of humanly formed propositions; that to exhibit the Christian faith in any limited number of statements is virtually to declare that all besides is superfluous; that such Articles nourish hypocrisy and hinder advancement in divine knowledge.

¹ Editorial, quoted by Dr. Buckley in *Christian Advocate*, Sept. 13, 1906.

Against this view it is contended that the design of such Articles is not to sum up the whole of Christianity, but merely to set forth the belief of a given Church upon the leading truths of religion, as well as touching those matters that have been subjects of heretical corruption or controversy, and respecting which it is necessary that there be, for the sake of peace, agreement among members of the same Church. Articles of Religion are not intended to be guides through all the voyage of Christian inquiry, but beacon lights to inform the mariner where lie those rocks and shoals in which preceding voyagers have made shipwreck.¹ A rational religious faith without dogma is impossible; that is, some authoritative formula is indispensable for that which is to be believed as true and defensible doctrine. Articles of Religion form a brief summary of truth which will serve as a guide to those lacking time and capacity for original investigation. Such persons, by them, will be encouraged and given confidence that they are standing on firm foundations laid by wise master-builders with materials taken from the Word of God.

¹ See McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopædia*, article "Articles of Faith."

WESLEY'S ABRIDGMENT COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

To give a correct account of the Twenty-five Articles of Religion of the Methodist Episcopal Church, it is necessary to show the omissions made by Wesley in his abridgment of the original Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. In this way may be traced the change that had taken place in his ecclesiastical and theological opinions. In his early life he was a High-Churchman, and from this viewpoint interpreted the standards of the Anglican Church, and accepted all her statements of belief. As he advanced in life he became more liberal and moderate in his opinions. He made the abridgment when in his eighty-first year. At that time, as his writings show, he had lost no clearness or vigor of mind. For years thereafter he carried on his stupendous work with unabated zeal, and made some of the most important arrangements for the extension and perpetuity of the denomination he founded.

The portion of the original Articles which Wesley retained and those which he omitted are equally significant. As the Articles now stand they show that the theology of American Methodism is essentially that of the Church of England. Nothing has been added to the American symbols that would distinguish Methodism from the great evangelical bodies of Protestantism, and nothing has been omitted that separates it from them. Such omissions as were made are justified by changed conditions, by progress of thought and advancement in learning, and give clear evidence of the wisdom of the founder of Methodism.

In the different editions of the Methodist Articles as they have appeared in the Discipline, changes, for the most part typographical, have been made from time to time. Occasionally modern terms of expression have been substituted for those which have become antiquated. Of these no further notice need be taken. The original and the abridged Articles, as approved by the Conference of 1784, follow:

ARTICLES

*Original**Abridged**I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity*

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Of this Article Wesley made no abridgment. It was copied entirely by him, but was changed by the Conference by the omission of the word “passions”; in this form it was printed in 1786, and has been retained unchanged to the present time.

II. Of the Word, or Son of God, which was made very Man

The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took Man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance: so that two whole and perfect Natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man; who truly suffered, was

II. Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made very Man

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a

crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men.

sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

Of this Article Wesley omitted but one brief phrase, the words "of her substance." The phrase is borrowed from the controversies of the first four Ecumenical Councils as to the relations of the two natures in the one Divine Person of Christ. It may be that Wesley deemed them superfluous, as the nature of Christ is unequivocally stated without them: "So that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person." The words "begotten from everlasting of the Father" were omitted by the Conference. See Article II, note, p. 68.

III. *Of the going down of Christ into Hell*

As Christ died for us, and was buried, so also is it to be believed, that he went down into Hell.

This Article Wesley omitted. It is based upon Psa. 16. 10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell"; and upon 1 Pet. 3. 19: "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Hell may be taken to mean the place to which all souls, whether good or bad, are carried after death. The Greek word so rendered was at the time of the writing of the New Testament used by Greek writers in this sense. There has been much controversy as to the interpretation of the passage quoted from Saint Peter, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits *in prison*." The Scriptures teach plainly that Christ went to paradise, taking the penitent thief with him to come forth on the third day for the resurrection.

The doctrine of the descent into Hades did not appear

in any Creed until late in the fourth century. It was found by Rufinus, a presbyter of Aquileia, a part of the Creed of his own Church. He understood it as referring to the burial of Christ. It is supposed to have been put into the Apostles' Creed as a guard against the heresy of Apollinaris. He taught that the divine nature in Christ rendered the human spirit needless; that the person of Christ was a composite of God and two elements only of human nature. The Article in the Creed thus stands for the defense of the doctrine of a separate human spirit in Christ. It appeared also in the Athanasian Creed in the sixth century. The opinion of the Church fathers on the meaning of this Article is summed up by Sir Peter King as follows: "That our Saviour's soul, being separated from his body by death, went unto the unseen mansion of separated spirits in the other world; that as his body, according to the laws of death, was laid in the grave, so in a conformity thereunto his soul also passed into the habitation of departed spirits, where it remained in its separate state among the souls of Abraham, Samuel, David, and all the godly in rest and peace, till the day of his resurrection."¹

The Anglican Article as it appeared in 1553 included an explanation of the purpose of the descent, but such violent controversy arose regarding this that at the revision in the reign of Elizabeth that portion was stricken out, leaving the Article in its present form. It is regarded as an "Article of Religion, not of faith." Bishop Brownell says, "The Rubric of the Prayer Book (American) provides that any churches may omit the words, 'He descended into hell,' or may instead of them use the words, 'He went into the place of departed spirits,' which are considered as words of the same meaning in the

¹ A Critical History of the Apostles' Creed, p. 242.

Creed."¹ The fact of the descent is controverted as well as the interpretations given of it. To put the doctrine into a formula and require its acceptance would be unwise. Its omission is an indication of Wesley's sound judgment and independence of thought. The Conference of 1786 indorsed this view by omitting the Article from the Apostles' Creed.

IV. *Of the Resurrection of Christ*

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.

III. *Of the Resurrection of Christ*

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

There are but three words omitted in this Article: "flesh, bones, and." Perhaps Wesley considered them superfluous, believing the clause "all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature" sufficiently clear and inclusive. It may be that he desired to avoid an expression which might be controverted. The mystery of ascension is difficult for finite minds to grasp. It involves a change of the mode of existence. It is enough to say, "all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature," without specifying "flesh and bones," leaving God to determine what is essential to the perfection of a glorified human body.

The Mediator between God and man is still himself "man" (1 Tim. 2. 5). By the ascension he has "entered upon the completeness of spiritual being without lessening in any degree the completeness of his humanity."

V. *Of the Holy Ghost*

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is

IV. *Of the Holy Ghost*

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is

¹ Commentary on the Prayer Book, p. 96.

of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

VI. *Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The First Book of Esdras, The Second Book of Esdras, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.

And the other Books (as *Hierome* saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following:

The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Tobias, The Book of Judith, The rest of the Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susannah, Of Bel and

of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

V. *The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. The names of the canonical books are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Song of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

It will be noted that the apocryphal books are omitted. These are frequently found in large family Bibles and may be "read for example of life and instruction of man-ners," but a list of them is not needed in an Article of Religion, not being canonical or to be applied "to establish any doctrine."

VII. *Of the Old Testament*

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

VIII. *Of the Three Creeds*

The Three Creeds, *Nicene Creed*, *Athanasius's Creed*, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles' Creed*, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture.

The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds embody the most abstruse doctrines of Christianity and were formulated

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in connection with the bitterest and most extended controversies known to the Church of Christ. The Creeds are the crystallized orthodox views of the Church in relation to the Holy Trinity, the divinity and person of Jesus Christ, and the deity and personality of the Holy Ghost.

The Nicene Creed is so named because the greater part of it was drawn up and agreed to at the Council of Nice in 325. The latter part, from the words "I believe in the Holy Ghost," was added by the Council of Constantinople in 381, except the words "and the Son" following the words "who proceedeth from the Father," which were added by the Spanish bishops in 412, and by the Council of Toledo in 589. The whole was confirmed by Pope Nicholas I in 883; since that time it has been generally accepted in the Western Churches. The Greek Church, however, has never accepted the words "and the Son."

The so-called Athanasian Creed was not written for more than a century after the death of Athanasius. This Creed is received in the Greek, Roman, and English Churches, but is excluded from the services of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. While accepted by the English Church, certain portions are severely condemned by English bishops and clergy. "Great objection has been made to the clauses of this Creed, which denounce eternal damnation against those who do not believe the Catholic faith as here stated; and it is certainly to be lamented that assertions of so peremptory a nature, unexplained and unqualified, should have been used in any human composition."¹

The Apostles' Creed forms a part of the Order of Public Worship in the Methodist Episcopal Church, but

¹ Tomline, *Christian Theology*, vol. ii, p. 185.

Wesley had objections to the other two, and for that reason omitted the Article. He says: "I dare not insist upon anyone's using the word Trinity or Person. I use them myself without any scruple, because I know of none better; but if any man has any scruple concerning them, who shall constrain him to use them? I cannot; much less would I burn a man alive, and that with moist green wood, for saying, 'Though I believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet I scruple using the words *Trinity* and *Persons*, because I do not find those terms in the Bible.'"¹

IX. Of Original or Birth Sin

Original Sin standeth not in the following of *Adam*, (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of *Adam*; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of Sin.

VII. Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of *Adam* (as the *Pelagians* do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam*, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

It will be observed that the word "fault" in the fourth line is omitted, and also all the Article after the words

¹ Works, vol. ii, p. 21. An allusion to Calvin and Servetus.

"inclined to evil"; while the words "and that continually" are added. The omission of the word "fault," if understood as implying inherited guilt, was doubtless made for doctrinal reasons. To be held as guilty of sin committed by another before we were born is contrary to our ideas of divine justice. Wesley says: "That text, 'As by one man's disobedience all men were made sinners, so by the obedience of One all were made righteous,' we conceive means, By the merits of Christ, all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam's actual sin."¹

Why the latter part of the article was omitted is easily seen. Wesley could not indorse its teaching. The flesh does indeed lust against the Spirit, but it does not follow that "therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." The English divines who subscribe to the Articles are not agreed on this subject, some following the views of Augustine and others rejecting them. The interpretation of the Article is modified and accommodated to the views of each party. While some understand the words in their literal import, others say that a mortal and corrupt nature is derived from Adam, and that every person is liable to punishment for the sin he commits, but not for the sin of Adam; and that mortality and the miseries that accompany it in this world may well be called "God's wrath and damnation, as temporary judgments are often denominated in Holy Scripture." Bishop Burnet appears to think it possible that the framers of the Article, although their own opinion coincided with that of Augustine, from a spirit of moderation designedly used such expressions as would admit of other interpretation.² It is better to omit than to retain what needs such an equivocal exposition.

¹ Works, vol. v, p. 196.

² See Tomline, Christian Theology, vol. ii, p. 204.

X. *Of Free Will*

The condition of Man after the fall of *Adam* is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

XI. *Of the Justification of Man*

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.

No change is made in this Article save that the allusion to the Homily of Justification is omitted. In the Church of England the term "homily" has acquired a special signification from the fact that at the time of the Reformation a number of plain, simple discourses were composed to be read in the churches. At that time it was difficult to find a sufficient number of clergymen to serve in the parish churches who were capable of composing their own sermons. The homily alluded to here is understood to be the Homily of Salvation. It is of greater authority than the rest because it is named in this Article as a fuller exposition of justification. It was written by Cranmer, and is, indeed, of great value, sound, simple, and eloquent.

XII. *Of Good Works*

Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification,

VIII. *Of Free Will*

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

IX. *Of the Justification of Man*

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

X. *Of Good Works*

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put

cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's Judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

XIII. *Of Works before Justification*

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

Why was this Article omitted? One would suppose from disapproval of its teaching. But Wesley indorses this most emphatically in his sermon on "Justification by Faith." He says: "All truly good works follow after justification; and they are therefore good and 'acceptable to God in Christ,' because they 'spring out of a true and living faith.' By a parity of reason, all works done before justification are not good, in the Christian sense, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ (though often from some kind of faith in God they may spring); 'yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not' (how strange soever it may appear to some) 'but they have the nature of sin.' . . . The argument plainly runs thus: No works are good which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done. But no works done before justification are done as God hath willed and com-

manded them to be done. Therefore, no works done before justification are good.”¹

Notwithstanding this indorsement of the Article in one of the fifty-three sermons which are among the standards of doctrine in Methodism, Wesley saw fit to omit it from his abridgment, as it is liable to be misunderstood. No works can have merit by which justification can be obtained. Acts good in themselves may spring from impure motives and therefore be sinful in the sight of God, while good men may approve. To feed the hungry and clothe the naked are good works, but if done to secure the praise of men the motive vitiates the act. But does not the grace of God go before every good act? Does not the Holy Spirit prompt and inspire to good works before justification is obtained? Can such good works “have the nature of sin”?

Wesley foresaw such questions would arise, that the doctrine would appear “strange to some”; and, while he himself believed and taught it, he was too broad-minded and too wise to make it an Article of Religion.

XIV. *Of Works of Supererogation*

Voluntary Works besides, over and above, God's Commandments, which they call Works of Supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake, than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

XV. *Of Christ alone without Sin*

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all

XI. *Of Works of Supererogation*

Voluntary works — besides, over, and above God's commandments—which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

¹ Works, vol. i, p. 49.

things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world, and sin, as Saint *John* saith, was not in him. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

This article Wesley omitted. He was in full accord with its first statement; his position as to the latter part will be best shown by his own writings:

“What is Christian perfection? The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love.

“Do you affirm that this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistake? I continually affirm quite the contrary, and always have done so. . . .

“Now, mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corruptible state of the body, are no way contrary to love; nor therefore, in the Scripture sense, sin. . . .

“I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please; I do not.”¹

¹ Works, vol. vi, pp. 500, 501.

With the above understanding of what sin is, in the Scripture sense, he writes:

"In conformity, therefore, both to the doctrine of Saint John, and to the whole tenor of the New Testament, we fix this conclusion, *a Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin.* . . .

" 'The disciple is not above his Master'; therefore, if I have suffered, be content to tread in my steps. And doubt ye not then but I will fulfill my word: 'For every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.' But his Master was free from all sinful tempers. So, therefore, is his disciple, even every real Christian."¹

Another of his conclusions is: "It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness; that they are now in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers."²

These quotations show sufficient reason for the omission of the Article.

XVI. *Of Sin after Baptism*

Not every deadly sin willingly committed after Baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after Baptism. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we may arise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, which say, they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XII. *Of Sin after Justification*

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

It is worthy of notice that the word "baptism" is displaced by the word "justification" in the title and also

¹ Works, vol. i, pp. 365, 366.

² Ibid., vol. i, p. 367.

in the body of this Article. This is indicative of Wesley's purpose to avoid any indorsement of the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration." Whatever were his views in early life, when he made the abridgment he had come to see that, the word "baptism" retained, the Article might be understood as implying regeneration through the sacrament of baptism.

The word "deadly" also is omitted. By deadly sin is not to be understood such sins as in the Church of Rome are called mortal, in opposition to others that are called venial; the adjective is employed to distinguish sins that have the consent of the will from others that are the result of ignorance or infirmity which may exist while the soul is in the favor of God. The full sense of it is included in the word "willingly"; the word "deadly" is misleading, and is therefore wisely omitted.

XVII. *Of Predestination and Election*

Predestination to Life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore, they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through Grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of

Predestination, and our Election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: So, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: and, in our doings, that Will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

The doctrines here presented are among the most abstruse in theology. From the time of Augustine to the present, controversies have been waged upon the doctrines of predestination and election, often with great bitterness, especially since the time of Calvin. Much opposition has arisen against these doctrines in the English Church, and this Article was formulated to allay the angry disputes regarding unconditional predestination, and to guard against the extravagances of belief and practice consequent upon the tenet of reprobation. The English Reformers had a difficult task to perform in the preparation of an Article which men of opposite views in regard to the free agency of man could receive.

But a method of interpretation was adopted to which both parties could subscribe.

The Bishop of Winchester says: "‘Those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind’ are that part of mankind to whom God decreed to make known the gospel; and it is to be observed that this expression does not distinguish one set of Christians from another, but Christians in general from the rest of mankind; and, consequently, ‘to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation’ does not mean actually saving them, but granting them the means of salvation through Christ."¹ "The words ‘elect’ and ‘chosen’ constantly denote collective bodies of men who were converted to the gospel, without any restriction to those who will obtain salvation; and an infallible certainty of eternal happiness in consequence of a divine decree is not attributed to any number of Christians, or to any single Christian, throughout the New Testament. Salvation is uniformly mentioned as contingent and conditional."² The Anglican divines deny absolute election and reprobation. Wesley was wise in discarding an Article which could not but be a source of controversy and an element of weakness.

As the Augustinian opinions were received and extended by Calvin, so the opinions of writers who opposed Augustine were developed and systematized by Arminius. These views Wesley accepted. Dr. Abel Stevens says: "The Arminianism of Wesley has been rightly so called. It is essentially true to the teaching of the great theologian of Holland, though not fully true to the elaborations of his system by Episcopius and Limborch, and much less to the perversions by its later eminent representatives. Wesley had the courage to place the name of Arminius on his periodical organ, one of the earliest and now the

¹ Tomline, *Christian Theology*, vol. ii, p. 258.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 260.

oldest of religious magazines in the Protestant world. His Arminianism was far from being that mongrel system of semi-Pelagianism and semi-Socinianism which, for generations, was denounced by New England theologians as Arminianism, until the most erudite Calvinistic authority of the Eastern States rebuked the baseless charge and bade his brethren be no longer guilty of it. . . . He taught the absolute sovereignty of God; that, like the potter with the clay, he can make some vessels for more, some for less honor; yet he also taught that, as wisdom and beneficence are essential attributes of the divine sovereignty, God neither would nor could (any more than the wise potter with his clay) make some for the gratification of a wanton caprice, in their destruction, much less in their interminable anguish.”¹

XVIII. *Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ*

They are also to be had accursed that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

This Article was formulated to deny and counteract a theory advocated by the Anabaptists, who had gained some foothold in England, and who asserted that men would be saved if they were faithful to the religion they professed, even though that religion rejected Christ. At first sight it would seem to deny that salvation is open to the heathen or to such as never heard the name of Jesus Christ, but this was not the design of the Reform-

¹ History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. ii, pp. 209, 210.

ers or the purpose of the Article. As in Wesley's time no sect was known to which it would apply, it is probable that he deemed it unnecessary.

XIX. *Of the Church*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of *Jerusalem*, *Alexandria*, and *Antioch*, have erred; so also the Church of *Rome* hath erred, not only in their living and manner of Ceremonies, but also in matters of Faith.

XIII. *Of the Church*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

The second paragraph of this Article is omitted. The Reformers were breaking away from the errors that for centuries had been accumulating and had been foisted upon the Church by a designing hierarchy, and wished to justify this action by showing how the Church had departed from the truth. In different places and times the Church has erred; so also the Church of Rome had erred in faith and practice. The Articles had been written more than two hundred years when Wesley made his abridgment, and though the allusions were to historic facts they were not now called for

XX. *Of the Authority of the Church*

The Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of

holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of Salvation.

This Article has occasioned much controversy. The first clause was not in the Article as adopted and printed in 1552-53, but was added in some unknown manner in 1562 from the Confession of Würtemberg and was never passed upon by both houses of Convocation, if indeed by either house. It is thought by some to have been added at the bidding of Queen Elizabeth; but in any case it lacks full synodical authorization. In 1571 several editions of the Articles were published, some with and some without this clause. In 1579, however, the Articles as printed in English contained it and it has been inserted in every subsequent edition.

Wesley's well-known liberality of view would indicate that he decided against the adoption of this Article, for the reason that, though it makes no pretension to infallibility in behalf of the Church, it seems to place a restriction upon individual thought. In matters of belief Wesley, though especially strict as to what his preachers should or should not teach, was exceedingly liberal as regards the laity.

XXI. *Of the Authority of General Councils*

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God), they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as

necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy Scripture.

This Article has a special application to the Church of England, to which the state is so closely united. The Article declares that Councils cannot be held without the consent of secular princes. This implies the right of the state not to allow any authoritative declaration of doctrine without its own consent. Wesley would doubtless have rejected this on principle, but at any rate it could have no application in the United States, where there is no connection between civil and ecclesiastical government.

XXII. *Of Purgatory*

The Romish Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshiping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also invocation of Saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.

XXIII. *Of Ministering in the Congregation*

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacraments in the Congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the Congregation, to call and send Ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XIV. *Of Purgatory*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

Wesley insisted that all things be done in an orderly manner, but believed the call of God sometimes comes before the call of the Church. It took him some time to

learn this. He was much astonished when he found Thomas Maxfield had begun to preach without his authority. When he heard him, and saw the fruit of his labors, he believed that God had called him, and thenceforward encouraged the work of lay preachers. Wesley favored liberty without restriction in the direction of good.

XXIV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People Understandeth

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.

XXV. Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly as states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments with Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

XV. Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People Understand

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, to have public prayer in the Church, or to administer the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

XVI. Of the Sacraments

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the Apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint *Paul* saith.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as Saint *Paul* saith, 1 Cor. II. 29.

There is but one omission in this Article that has special significance. The words "sure witnesses, and effectual," are omitted. Wesley began his career as a High-Churchman, and his early practices and written opinions favored the views of that school of theology. This is especially true in regard to baptismal regeneration. He wrote: "By baptism we, who were by nature children of wrath, are made the children of God."¹ But Wesley held his mind open to conviction and was always ready to adopt new views that could be proven by the Word of God, or relinquish old ones that could not stand the Scripture test. That his views on this subject changed is evident from the omissions made in the American Articles, and from his later writings. He did not regard the sacraments as "*sure witnesses and effectual*" signs of grace in the heart. The word "damnation" is changed to "condemnation," which better comports with the rendering now given the original.

XXVI. *Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacrament*

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the Ministration of the Word and Sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister

¹ Wesley and High-Churchmen, p. 6.

by his commission and authority, we may use their Ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in receiving of the Sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the Sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual, because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church, that inquiry be made of evil Ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offenses; and finally being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

This Article was taken from the Augsburg Confession. It was designed in that and also in the Anglican Articles to repudiate the teaching of the Anabaptists that the validity of the sacraments was destroyed by the personal unworthiness of the administrator. This view had been effectually controverted by Augustine, who had established the opposite view, showing that the minister was only the organ of the ever-blessed Son of God, who is, though invisible, ever present to bestow his grace in or through the holy ordinances upon all who worthily receive them by faith. In Wesley's time no other teaching than this was known.

XXVII. *Of Baptism*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption

XVII. *Of Baptism*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; Faith is confirmed, and Grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God. The Baptism of young Children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.

The changes made in this Article are regarded as more significant than those made in the twenty-fifth, but they were evidently made for the same reason. "The omissions are the more remarkable," says Stevens, "as the original Article presents little or nothing that is offensive to the general faith of Protestant Christendom. Evidently the reason for this cautious change was his apprehension that it might be supposed to favor, however indirectly, the doctrine of 'baptismal regeneration.'"¹

XXVIII. *Of the Lord's Supper*

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten, in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of Christ is

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The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

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The body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is re-

¹ History of Methodist Episcopal Church, vol. ii, p. 207.

received and eaten in the Supper is Faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

ceived and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

XXIX. *Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper*

The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as Saint Augustine saith) the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ: but rather, to their condemnation, do eat and drink the sign or Sacrament of so great a thing.

This Article was inserted in 1562, and was afterward struck out to conciliate the Roman Catholics. In 1570 the papal bull of excommunication was issued against the English Church, and it was then reinserted and has always remained. It was omitted by Wesley, probably because its language admitted of controversy and gave traces of Catholic traditions.

XXX. *Of both Kinds*

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord's Sacrament, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ministered to all Christian men alike.

XIX. *Of both Kinds*

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay People; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

XXXI. *Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross*

The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly

XX. *Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross*

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said

said, that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.

that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

XXXII. *Of the Marriage of Priests*

Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are not commanded by God's Law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness.

XXI. *Of the Marriage of Ministers*

The Ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

There is no change of importance here. The word "Priests" is changed to "Ministers" in the title, and the words "Bishops, Priests, and Deacons" are changed to "The Ministers of Christ."

XXXIII. *Of excommunicate Persons, how they are to be avoided*

That person which by open denunciation of the Church is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church, and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful, as an Heathen and Publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a Judge that hath authority thereunto.

The purpose of this Article was "to vindicate for the Church her right to exercise discipline over her members, a right much disputed, as by Anabaptists and in the Vestitarian Controversy, under Edward VI."¹ It savors too much of Catholic tradition and practice to be adapted to an American Church. Though retained by the An-

¹ Kidd on the Articles, vol. ii, p. 249.

glican and Protestant Episcopal Church, it is not acted upon in the spirit of its intention.

XXXIV. *Of the Traditions of the Church*

It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the Church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying.

XXII. *Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches*

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

The title of this Article is changed from "Of the Traditions of the Church" to "Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches." In two places in the body of the Article the word "rites" is used instead of "traditions." The "traditions" of the Church as a foundation for Christian doctrine having been discarded at the Reformation, Wesley had no place for the word in the Articles of Religion. The phrase "hurteth the authority of the magistrate" was omitted. In this land of religious liberty the civil magistrate has no authority over matters condemned in

this Article. The words "or national" are also omitted, because no Church in the United States bears that distinction.

XXXV. *Of the Homilies*

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this Article, doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth; and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the Ministers, diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

Of the names of the Homilies.

- 1 *Of the right use of the Church.*
- 2 *Against peril of Idolatry.*
- 3 *Of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.*
- 4 *Of good Works: first of Fasting.*
- 5 *Against Gluttony and Drunkenness.*
- 6 *Against Excess of Apparel.*
- 7 *Of Prayer.*
- 8 *Of the Place and Time of Prayer.*
- 9 *That Common Prayers and Sacraments ought to be ministered in a known tongue.*
- 10 *Of the reverend estimation of God's Word.*
- 11 *Of Alms-doing.*
- 12 *Of the Nativity of Christ.*
- 13 *Of the Passion of Christ.*
- 14 *Of the Resurrection of Christ.*
- 15 *Of the worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ.*
- 16 *Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.*
- 17 *For the Rogation-days.*
- 18 *Of the state of Matrimony.*
- 19 *Of Repentance.*
- 20 *Against Idleness.*
- 21 *Against Rebellion.*

There is no place for this Article in Methodism. The

conditions that called forth the Homilies do not exist in its communion (see Article XI).

XXXVI. *Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers*

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and Ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of *Edward* the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such Consecration and Ordering: neither hath it anything, that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And therefore whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the Rites of that Book, since the second year of the forenamed King *Edward* unto this time, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same Rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

This Article belongs exclusively to the Church of England. Its forms and ceremonies were authorized by Parliament. Wesley provided for the consecration of bishops and the ordination of elders and deacons by an abridgment of the forms used in the Anglican Church. This abridgment was in the Sunday Service sent by him for use in American Methodism, was adopted by the Christmas Conference, and has been in continuous use to the present time.

XXXVII. *Of the Civil Magistrates*

The Queen's Majesty hath the chief power in this Realm of *England*, and other her Dominions, unto whom the chief Government of all Estates of this Realm, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought

XXIII. *Of the Rulers of the United States of America*

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the Delegates of the People*, are the Rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitu-

to be, subject to any foreign Jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the Queen's Majesty the chief government, by which Titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our Princes the ministering either of God's Word, or of the Sacraments, the which thing the Injunctions also lately set forth by *Elizabeth* our Queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly Princes in holy Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all states and degrees committed to their charge by God, whether they be Ecclesiastical or Temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evildoers.

The Bishop of *Rome* hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of *England*.

The laws of the Realm may punish Christian men with death, for heinous and grievous offenses.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars.

tion of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent Nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.¹

¹ As far as it respects civil affairs we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially of all Christian Ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and therefore it is expected that all our Preachers and People, who may be under the British or any other Government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.

Article XXIII of the Methodist Episcopal Church takes the place of Article XXXVII of the Anglican Church. Each is suited to the government, laws, and condition of the country in whose interests it was framed.

XXXVIII. *Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common*

The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXIV. *Of Christian Men's Goods*

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXXIX. *Of a Christian Man's Oath* XXV. *Of a Christian Man's Oath*

As we confess that vain and rash Swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and *James* his Apostle, so we judge that Christian Religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the Magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and *James* his Apostle; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

ARTICLE I

OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article is derived from the Augsburg Confession. It was adopted by the English Reformers, when the Thirteen Articles were prepared, as the basis of a projected alliance with the Germans in 1538. From the Thirteen Articles it passed into the Forty-two Articles of 1553, and then to the Thirty-nine now in use as the standard of doctrine in the Church of England, and so, by Wesley's action, into the Methodist Episcopal Book of Discipline.

In copying this Article from the Germans the English Reformers made some additions. The first section reads, "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts." To this they added "passions." This is to be noted especially because the Conference of 1784, in reviewing and preparing the Articles for the Methodist Episcopal Church, omitted the word "passions," and followed the Augsburg Confession. The word is liable to be misunderstood by the ordinary reader. The literal meaning is "suffering," but it is used to represent the emotions, as anger, love, joy, and these are frequently predicated of the Divine Being.

II. THE AIM

This Article is aimed against certain heresies that appeared in the early Christian Church.

Sabellius, a presbyter of the Church in the third century, taught heretical doctrines concerning the Trinity, and was excommunicated by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in the year 261. His teachings made considerable progress and were antagonized by two Councils, one in Alexandria in 261 and one in Rome in the year following. "He differs from the orthodox view by his denial of the trinity of essence and the permanence of the three-fold manifestation, thus making of the Father, Son, and Spirit simply a transient series of phenomena, which fulfill their mission and then return into the abstract one divine substance."¹ His doctrines have been revived by several theologians in different periods of the Church.

The Article condemns Arianism. This distinctive doctrine was introduced by Arius, a presbyter of the church in Alexandria. It is a heresy in regard to the person of Jesus Christ which spread widely in the Church from the fourth to the seventh century. The points of belief in relation to the person of Christ, involving his divinity, had not arrived at scientific precision in the mind of the Church at that time. For this reason, as Arius was an eloquent and popular preacher, the doctrines taught by him gained great headway and permeated all classes. The controversies occasioned by it called for the assembling of many Convocations, Synods, and Councils. Many of the ablest minds of the Church were engaged, and only after the lapse of several centuries did the Church arrive at a consistent, definite, and permanent form of expression of truth. The views of Arius are briefly stated by him

¹ McClintock and Strong, article "Sabellius."

in a letter to Eusebius. He says: "We cannot assent to these expressions, 'always Father, always Son'; 'at the same time Father and Son'; that 'the Son always coexists with the Father'; that 'the Father has no pre-existence before the Son, no, not so much as in thought for a moment.' But this we think and teach, that the Son is not unbegotten, nor a part of the unbegotten, by any means. Nor is he made out of any preëxistent thing; but, by the will and pleasure of the Father, he existed before time and ages, the only begotten God, unchangeable; and that before he was begotten, or made, or designed, or founded, he was not."¹ Arius was deposed and excommunicated 321.

Out of this controversy came the Nicene Creed, which condemned the doctrines of Arius and established the doctrine of the person of Christ as it has been held in the Church until this day, declaring the Son to be "begotten of his Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made."

The controversy has been perpetuated to some extent to the present day among Churchmen and Dissenters in England and America. This fact shows the propriety of the place the Article holds in the standards of the Church. The special cause of putting the Article in the Augsburg Confession and in the Book of Common Prayer was the revival of the condemned heresies by the Anabaptists. The heresy spread in Germany, Holland, Switzerland, and England, and gave much trouble to the Reformers. It repudiated the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and denied the doctrine of the Trinity. The Anabaptists united religion and political controversies and

¹ McClintock and Strong, article "Arianism."

fanaticism, and carried them beyond reason and loyalty. In some things relating to the union of political and ecclesiastical power, and in the methods for the propagation of their doctrines, they were not unlike the Mormon Church of our day.

The Article was aimed also against the sect known as Anthropomorphites, which had an existence in the third century, and is said to have reappeared in Italy in the tenth. Its error consisted in the ascription to God of human form and feelings—that God is in form as a man, material, and with members like our own. Such a heresy one would imagine too gross long to survive. The Gentiles were charged with “changing the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man” (Rom. i. 23), but these errorists were so much more gross in their conceptions as to regard God himself as human in form and feeling. It is strange that every error, however absurd or grotesque, reappears at intervals of longer or shorter duration. This error, which for centuries seems to have slept, has been recently revived by the Mormons. In their catechism God is described as an intelligent material personage, possessing body, parts, and passions, and unable to occupy two distinct places at the same time. They say, “Jesus Christ and the Father are two persons, in the same sense that John and Peter are two persons, possessing every organ, limb, and material part that man possesses. There is no other God in heaven but the God who has flesh and bones.”¹ The Church in the purity and stability of its faith has not outgrown the Article, so as to render it inappropriate to our time. The errors of anthropomorphism will have to be antagonized with intelligence and vigor by the present and future generations of Christian ministers.

¹ Articles of Faith of the Church of Latter-Day Saints.

III. THE EXPOSITION

*The Existence of God***There is but one living and true God.**

This sentence is sublime. It suggests the first words of Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Bishop Burnet justly observes that "the first of all Articles in Religion should be concerning the being and attributes of God; for all other doctrines arise out of this." A belief in the existence of God is founded upon the principles of natural religion. Men are not dependent upon the Bible for the idea of God's existence. The necessity and fact of the existence of a great First Cause is impressed upon the mind by the visible universe. So wrote the psalmist: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (Psa. 19. 1-4). So more specifically wrote Saint Paul: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Rom. I. 20).

The knowledge of God's existence, where there is an intelligent mind to grasp it, is as wide as the universe. The book lies open to inspection before the eyes of all. Attention and reflection only are necessary to read the testimony it gives in proof of its divine authorship. Those who do not perceive this are left "without excuse." The mind of man, even from the primitive ages, has been impressed with the wisdom and power of God from evi-

dences found in the works of creation. From these, by the exercise of reason, he is able and bound to infer the existence of God. Perception of the phenomena of the universe alone is sufficient to account for the universal theism of the race, even were it not for the nature of the human soul which constantly cries out for the living God.

It is proper to incorporate the doctrine of God's existence as an Article of belief by the Christian Church, though it may not differentiate the Christian from other religionists. We find it in the oldest formulas of Christian belief. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This is the avowed confession of every Christian nation and the faith of every individual believer. It is the foundation of all religion. A consciousness of God and a desire to know him is the fundamental principle of religion, whether true or false. The power to apprehend the existence of God is a natural endowment; it is born with us and is one of those powers that constitute man a rational and moral being, responsible to the Creator and Ruler of the universe. "We are assured throughout the Scriptures," says Watson, "that God communicated the knowledge of himself and his will originally to mankind; that this knowledge, though disregarded and darkened, was never wholly lost; that the visible creation was a standing testimony to it as existing, not the means of first revealing it, nor of recovering it through a process of reasoning, if, in any instance, entirely lost."¹

The Bible never argues this question, but appeals to man's consciousness, and takes for granted that all men recognize a Being on whom they depend and to whom they are responsible. "It appeals to the law written in

¹ Exposition.

their hearts, which implies a Lawgiver; and to the sense of dependence which feels after the Source of all existence, if haply they might feel after him, and find him—find him, who is already known, in order to the relief of its fear and the satisfaction of its desires.”¹ The constitution of human nature is such that it naturally develops consciousness of God, when God presents himself, even as it grows into consciousness of self and of the outer world. “Thus,” says A. A. Hodge, “man is as universally a religious as he is a rational being. And whenever the existence and character of God, as providential and moral ruler, is offered as fact, then every human soul responds to it as true, seen in its own self-evidencing light, in the absence of all formal demonstration.”²

The Unity of God

The existence of God does not admit of demonstration, yet is a matter of reasonable certainty, and is allowed by the general consensus of mankind. This Article asserts the unity of God, which a large part of mankind denies. This denial existed in past ages, and it exists now; not only among savage and degraded peoples, but also among some highly civilized nations.

Athens stood at the head of the civilized world in art, literature, and philosophy, but Saint Paul found the city “wholly given to idolatry” (Acts 8. 16). One of the Greek writers said, “Our region is so full of deities that you may more frequently meet with a god than a man.” The city possessed more marble statues than living men, each deifying some human attribute or abstract idea, as fame, pleasure, pity, and an altar dedicated to the “Unknown God”; and the moral attributes of these

¹ Pope, *Theology*, vol. i, p. 234.

² *Outlines of Theology*, p. 12.

deities, and the morals of the people, were such as to call forth the sarcasm,

"Be heaven and earth amazed, 'tis hard to say
Which are more vile, their gods or they."

There are many parts of the earth where polytheism prevails, where everyone frames to himself a deity and falls down to worship it.

We believe "there is one God," and but one "living and true God." We believe this in opposition to the assertions of atheists and the false polytheism of the heathen. There can be but one being almighty, infinite, and eternal. "The moment we undertake to conceive two almighty beings," says Comford, "they become identified in the conception. Both have all power—each has unlimited power. The power of one is not limited by the power of the other. Both have the same power. Both have the same essence. Both are the same—they are one. Therefore, two infinite beings is a contradiction."¹

Of the unity of God Scripture proofs are abundant: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6. 4). "Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him" (Deut. 4. 35). "He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (Deut. 4. 39). "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isa. 44. 6). "We know that . . . there is no other God but one" (1 Cor. 8. 4). "There is one God" (1 Tim. 2. 5). Saint Paul in 1 Thess. 1. 9 applies the epithet "living and true" to God: "Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." Jeremiah says, "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God" (Jer. 10. 10). He is the living God, that is, he "hath

¹ On the Twenty-five Articles, p. 29.

life in himself" (John 5. 26). He is self-existent, deriving his being from no exterior cause. "In him we live" (Acts 17. 28). "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17. 25). He is the foundation and origin of life to all the animated part of creation; he is the true God, as distinguished from the vain gods of the heathen world. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God" (John 17. 3).

After the existence and unity of God are asserted we have the nature of the one living and true God described. The description is according to the attributes ascribed to God in the Scriptures.

Everlasting.

Eternity is one of the natural attributes of God, being independent of his will; it is his nature and essence. He is everlasting, enduring without end; perpetual, eternal. Eternity looks both ways and includes past, present, and future existence. It is that in the whole of which God alone can be said to exist, and which the infinite mind alone can comprehend. The eternity of God covers every other attribute, so that his wisdom, power, and love are all infinite and eternal. If one could form a perfect idea of eternity he could not conceive of any succession of thought present to the mind of God. All existence and all thought must be to him ever-present. He knows the end from the beginning. His is an eternal now.

That God is eternal is the constant declaration of the Scriptures: He is "the eternal God" (Deut. 33. 27); "the King eternal" (1 Tim. 1. 17); "the everlasting God" (Isa. 40. 28); "the everlasting Father" (Isa. 9. 6). "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God" (Psa. 90. 2). In reference to this attribute God first revealed himself to his people: "I AM THAT I AM. . . . Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me

unto you" (Exod. 3. 14). It is as though he had said, "I am he who exists, the Eternal who passes not away." As in the first revelation of himself he speaks of his eternity, so in the last, as though he would have this thought remain with his people: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1. 8).

The Church fathers largely ascribed this perfection to the Deity. Tertullian in striking language says: "Deity has its origin neither in novelty nor in antiquity, but in its one true nature. Eternity has no time. It is itself all time. It acts; it cannot then suffer. It cannot be born, therefore it lacks age. God, if old, forfeits the eternity that is to come; if new, the eternity which is past. The newness bears witness to a beginning, the oldness threatens an end. God, moreover, is as independent of a beginning and end as he is of time, which is only the arbiter and measure of a beginning and an end."¹

"God only is immutable; because nothing that is past goes from him, neither will anything that is to come be added to him; but whatever is, was, or is to come, is all present with him. And as we can think of nothing (in him) that had a beginning, so neither can we think of anything in him that shall have an end."²

To the Christian the eternity of God is a subject of contemplation and comfort. "The eternal God is thy dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33. 27, R. V.). The arm is an emblem of power, and the arm of God is his almighty power, and this shall be eternally exerted in behalf of all who trust in him. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all genera-

¹ Against Marcion, book i, chap. viii.

² Augustine.

tions. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psa. 90. 1, 2).

Without body or parts.

Man in his intellectual weakness may apprehend something of the nature of the Divine Being by ascribing all perfections to him that we know of a spirit in our own consciousness, and excluding all that is inconsistent with our conceptions of pure spirit. Theologians speak of the positive and negative perfections of the Deity. The positive describe him as he is, the negative as he is not. The Article says he is "without body or parts." He was not made, is not of any material substance. If he were this would exclude him from all places occupied by other material bodies. When Christ was upon earth God was incarnated in him. He lived in Palestine and had a local habitation. He is not confined to place or time. "God is a Spirit." So Jesus, who came forth from the Father, defined him (John 4. 24). "A spirit hath not flesh and bones" (Luke 24. 39). God is a pure spiritual being, incorruptible, invisible, intangible, and indivisible. "To whom then will ye liken me, that I should be equal to him?" (Isa. 40. 25, R. V.). The second commandment alludes to the spirituality of God to guard human conception from anything that would debase it when meditating upon God the supreme object of worship; and to impress the mind with a sense of the dignity of man's origin, and the grandeur of his vocation as a worshiper of the Divine Eternal Spirit. "It was the opinion both of the ancient Jews and the ancient Christians," says Wesley, "that he alone is a pure Spirit, totally separate from all matter; whereas they supposed all other spirits, even the highest angels, even Cherubim and Seraphim,

to dwell in material vehicles, though of an exceeding light and subtile substance.”¹

The infinity of God is irreconcilable with the idea that he has “body or parts.” Charnock reasons, “They must be finite or infinite; finite parts can never make up an infinite being. Infinite parts they can never be, because then every part would be equal to the whole, as infinite as the whole, which is a contradiction.”²

Tertullian says, “For whatever can be God must as God be of necessity the Highest. But whatever is the Highest must certainly be the Highest in such sense as to be without any equal. And thus must needs be alone and one on which nothing can be conferred, having no peer; because there cannot be two infinities, as the very nature of things dictates.”³

In those passages of Scripture in which human parts are ascribed to God—when the face, eyes, ears, and hands of God are referred to—the phraseology is accommodated to the understanding of man. We can form no conception of the agency of a pure spiritual substance, and therefore in speaking of God we are under the necessity of using terms derived from ourselves, and which we cannot but know to be in reality inapplicable to him. Our worship of God must be, therefore, spiritual. “They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4. 24); not necessarily without human aids or forms, but offering the homage of our spirit to the Spirit of God.

Of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.

These are positive attributes of God. They are manifested in his works and in the plan of human redemption. His power, wisdom, and goodness are not limited or

¹ Works, vol. ii, p. 430.

² Treatise on the Trinity, chap. iv.

³ Quoted by Comfort, p. 39.

circumscribed, but boundless. God can do whatever is possible to be done, that is to say, everything that is not in itself a contradiction; as for a thing to be and not to be, to be made and not to be made, because these things directly contradict and destroy each other.

The doctrine of omnipotence is sustained by positive declaration of Scripture: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Psa. 135. 6). Jehovah "spake, and it was done" (Psa. 33. 9). "I am the Almighty God" (Gen. 17. 1). "Thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee" (Jer. 32. 17).

The infinite power of God is suggested also by reason. In the nature of things there must be a great First Cause. The facts of the material universe point back of these phenomena, to an infinite power guided by intelligence. The soul of the scientist cries out for the "cause of causes" as deeply and loudly as the soul of the Christian believer cries for the living God. That which is suggested by reason and demanded by scientific investigation is confirmed by the Holy Scriptures.

The infinite power of God inspires confidence and hope in the mind of the believer. "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God: which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth forever" (Psa. 146. 5, 6). The wisdom of God stands among his moral attributes. "It is partly natural and partly moral, being a compound of knowledge and benevolence."¹ The wisdom of God supposes infinite knowledge of things and skill to apply that knowledge. In creation wisdom and power are manifest. "Great is our Lord, and of great

¹ Binney, Compend, p. 85.

power: his understanding is infinite" (Psa. 147. 5). His wisdom is seen in the construction and government of the world. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all" (Psa. 104. 24). His benevolence is seen in the provision made for the wants of man, and in the redemption of the race. His wisdom includes a knowledge of all events, past, present, and future, and of the thoughts, motives, and intentions of all his creatures. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15. 18). "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see? . . . he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" (Psa. 94. 9, 10.) "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4. 13). "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28. 9). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11. 33.)

Wesley says: "God is infinite in wisdom as well as in power, and all his wisdom is continually employed in managing all the affairs of his creation for the good of all his creatures. For his wisdom and goodness go hand in hand; they are inseparably united, and continually act in concert with almighty power, for the real good of all his creatures. His power being equal to his wisdom and goodness, continually coöperates with them."¹

The divine goodness is everywhere manifest, and has been from the beginning of the world. When God looked upon his finished creation he "saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1. 31). "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy

¹ Works, vol. ii, p. 102.

paths drop fatness" (Psa. 65. 11). But more abundantly is his goodness seen in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ. This is the climax of divine benevolence as known to man in his earthly life. It lies at the foundation of all God's dealings with him. It is the channel through which grace and mercy flow in rich abundance. It indicates the disposition of God to communicate every possible degree of happiness to all created beings. Salvation from sin, the impartation of holiness, comes to man through "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1. 11). Dr. Adam Clarke's translation is, "The gospel of the glory of the blessed or happy God—a dispensation which exhibits the glory of all his attributes; and, by saving man in such a way as is consistent with the glory of all the divine perfections, while it brings peace and good will among men, brings glory to God in the highest."¹ No human emergency is beyond God's power, no perplexity beyond his wisdom, no want beyond his goodness.

Maker and preserver of all things.

In this clause the Article treats of the relation of God to the universe. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1. 1). "Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4. 11). The Article in this phrase excludes from Christian belief errors of both ancient and modern times. It opposes the Gnostics, who interposed a demiurge between God and the world of matter, attributing to him creative powers; pantheism, which identifies the Deity with the material universe, making the latter a part of God; and deism, which represents that God made the world and set it going, and then left it to run itself.

Not only did God make all things, visible and invisible,

¹ Commentary, in loco.

but he preserves them—"upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1. 3). The omnipotence of God is the ground and secret of all material, mental, and spiritual phenomena, and they lie forever in his continued agency and universal providence. "He not only keeps them in being, but preserves them in that degree of well-being which is suitable to their several natures. He preserves them in their several relations, connections, and dependencies, so as to compose one system of beings, to form one entire universe, according to the counsel of his will. How strongly and beautifully is this expressed: *Τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκε*, 'By whom all things consist'; or, more literally, 'By and in him are all things compacted into one system.' He is not only the support, but also the cement, of the whole universe."¹

The Trinity

And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

The doctrine of the Trinity has formed a part of the creed of all those who have been deemed sound in the faith from the earliest ages of Christianity. It is not peculiar to the New Testament; it is found in the Old, though not so clearly and specifically stated as in the New. There are traces of it also in the writings of the Greek philosophers. Plato, Parmenides, and others held the doctrine of three divine natures. It is supposed by some that they borrowed the idea from the Old Testament. Some scholars who have made elaborate inquiries into the mythologies of pagan nations profess to find in them the teaching of a trinity in the divine nature. A doctrine so singular could hardly be regarded as an invention of

¹ Wesley, Works, vol. ii, p. 178.

human reason, and cannot be accounted for save by the presumption that it was a part of the primitive religion communicated by God to the patriarchs and by them to their posterity. It was, however, a doctrine likely to be perverted, and in transmission to remote countries and to distant generations it became corrupted. A proper statement and confirmation of it could only be given by Him who came forth from the bosom of God to give more abundant light to mankind on spiritual and divine things. Very clear intimations of the Trinity are found in the Bible account of creation. In the first sentence, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the Hebrew word *Elohim*, God, is the plural form of *El*, or *Eloah*, and has long been supposed by eminent scholars to imply a plurality of persons in the divine nature. "This plurality," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "appears in many parts of the sacred writings to be confined to three persons."¹ Since, therefore, *Elohim* is plural, we are to understand by this term so particularly used in this place God the Father, the eternal Logos or Word of God—that Logos whom Saint John says was in the beginning with God, and who was God—and the "Spirit of God," which the next verse says "moved upon the face of the waters." Here we have the three persons in one God—the Father, Son, and Spirit—engaged in the creation of the world. In the creation of man, also, all the persons in the Godhead united in counsel and action. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. i. 26). Here the plurality is unequivocally expressed and the act proposed is the prerogative of Deity. This passage is quoted in proof of the Trinity from the earliest fathers to the present day.

Many passages in the Old Testament teach a plurality

¹ Commentary, in loco.

of persons in the Deity, and the comments of learned Jewish rabbis show they were so understood by them, but it is well the doctrine does not rest upon these alone. Expositions in the New Testament of passages taken from the Old prove their true meaning.

The doctrine of the Trinity is contained in the charge and commission of Christ to the apostles: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19). It is also found in the bestowment of gifts to the Church: "He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4. 11, R. V.). On this W. T. Davison says: "In this 'he gave' means 'Christ gave.' In 1 Cor. 12 we read 'God set' in his Church apostles and the rest; also in the same chapter we are told that the actual worker is 'one and the same Spirit dividing to each severally as he will.' God, Christ, Spirit—these three are one. No mode of speech concerning the three persons in the Trinity must ever mar the unity of God-head. God in Christ, by the Spirit, is the giver of all good gifts to men and of this high boon of men to the Church."¹

Since baptism is to be performed "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," they must all three be persons; and, since no superiority or difference between them can be predicated, they must all be of one substance, power, and eternity. "Are we to be baptized," asks Tomline, "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and is it possible that the Father should be self-existent and eternal, the Lord God Omnipotent; and the Son, in whose name we are equally baptized, should be a mere man

¹ Ordination Charge, 1902, p. 10.

born of a woman, and subject to all the frailties and imperfections of human nature? or, is it possible that the Holy Ghost, in whose name also we are equally baptized, should be a bare energy or operation, a quality or power, without even personal existence? Our feelings, as well as our reason, revolt from the idea of such a disparity.”¹ Saint Paul closed his Second Epistle to the Corinthians with the benediction: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.” None but persons can confer grace and communion; and the apostle offers his prayer to each of the three without indicating any disparity between them.

In Matt. 28. 19 the persons are named in the following order: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The variation in itself indicates an equality of persons, it being indifferent in what order they are named.

The doctrine of the Trinity was believed and taught by the early Church fathers. Justin Martyr said, “The Father, and the Son, and the prophetic Spirit we worship and adore.”² Irenæus, quoting Psa. 110. 1, wrote, “‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.’ Here the Scriptures represent the Father addressing the Son, he who gave him the inheritance of the heathen, and subjected to him all his enemies. Since, therefore, the Father is truly Lord and the Son truly Lord, the Holy Ghost has fitly designated them by the title of Lord.”³

Tertullian says, “For the very Church itself is, properly and principally, the Spirit himself, in whom is the Trinity of the one Divinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”⁴

Hippolytus says, “It is the Father who commands, and

¹ Christian Theology, vol. ii, p. 72.
² Against Heresies, Book iii, chap. vi.

³ First Apology, chap. xi.
⁴ On Modesty, chap. xxi.

the Son who obeys, and the Holy Spirit who gives understanding: the Father who is *above all*, and the Son who is *through all*, and the Holy Ghost who is *in all*. And we cannot otherwise think of one God, but by believing in truth in Father and Son and Holy Spirit."¹

Quotations from the fathers could be multiplied indefinitely, but enough has been said to show that from apostolic times to Augustine the doctrine of the Trinity was held. These quotations will be sufficient refutation of the assertion that the Trinity is an invention of the fourth century. A succession of theological literature in all the centuries bears clear testimony to the faith of the Church in this great mystery of the Christian religion. Methodist divines accept and teach it as vastly important while acknowledging its profound mystery.

Richard Watson says: "Whether we address our prayers and adorations to the Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, we address the *same adorable Being, the one living and true God*. With reference to the relations which each person bears to us in the redeeming economy, our approaches to the Father are to be made through the mediation of the Son, and by, or with dependence upon, the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Yet, as the authority of the New Testament shows, this does not preclude *direct* prayer to Christ and to the Holy Spirit, and direct ascriptions of glory and honor to each. In all this we glorify the one 'God over all, blessed for evermore.'"²

Dr. Raymond approaches it as "a doctrine of pure revelation—a doctrine at once the central idea, the fundamental truth, and the greatest mystery of the Christian system. The Trinity is its chief corner stone; it is peculiar to it, and distinguishes it from all other religions. Eliminate that, with what logically follows it, and noth-

¹ Against Heresy of Noetus, Sec. 14.

² Institutes, vol. i, p. 475.

ing is left but what is common to all theistic systems of religion known among men.”¹

Wesley wrote of the Trinity as an incomprehensible mystery. Those who attempted to explain it “darkened counsel by words without knowledge.” To him it was a fact revealed in God’s Word, and therefore an object of faith, although the manner of it, not being revealed, is therefore not an object of faith.²

The doctrine of the Trinity is essential to Christianity; without it there is no Christology. The knowledge of the Three-One God is interwoven with all true Christian faith and with all vital religion. It can never be surrendered, since to surrender it would be to destroy every evangelical feature of the gospel.

When faith is firmly fixed upon this foundation the Christian beholds God as his Father, Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and the Spirit as his Sanctifier and Comforter, and has communion with the Father, and with the Son, and with the Holy Ghost.

¹Theology, vol. i, pp. 375, 392.

²Works, vol. ii, pp. 23, 24.

ARTICLE II

OF THE WORD, OR SON OF GOD, WHO WAS MADE
VERY MAN

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was taken from the Augsburg Confession. It constitutes the first part of the third Article of that formula. Archbishop Cranmer, and the German divines who came in 1538 to advise with the English Reformers, made it a part of the Thirteen Articles. It became a part of the Forty-two issued in 1553. In 1562 the clause, "begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father," taken from the Württemberg Confession, was added to it, and with this addition it passed into the Thirty-nine Articles and was adopted by Wesley in his abridgment.¹

II. THE AIM

This Article is aimed against heresies that arose in the first four centuries, and its phraseology is that which was

¹ As prepared by Wesley the Article contained the words, "begotten from everlasting of the Father." In 1786 they were omitted, whether by accident or design may never be known. They are also omitted from the Service book of the English Wesleyans. The doctrine of the eternal Sonship was disputed among Methodists, denied by Adam Clarke and defended by Richard Watson and Richard Treffry.

adopted at that time to condemn the errors then prevalent. Most of these heresies had relation to the person of Christ. Errors on this point of Christian doctrine appeared very early, and at various times became so widespread as to shake the foundations of the Church. In the first century of its history the humanity of Christ was more bitterly assailed than his divinity. The earliest Errorists were the Gnostics and their most extreme branch, the Manichees. After the death of the apostles these heretical sects increased rapidly. Their speculations were bold and almost endless. Some taught that the body of Christ was a mere phantom; that he was not born of the Virgin Mary according to the flesh, but in appearance only. Others taught that Jesus was not an incarnation of God; that every one who could soar to the same height of contemplation might attain the same powers with Christ, and that Christ differed in no respect from the good of all ages.

The most important controversies on this subject arose from the teachings of the Arians, the Apollinarians, the Nestorians, the Eutychians, and the Monothelites. Arius taught that the human body of Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, and that the Divine Word was in the place of the soul. Apollinaris taught that our Lord took a human body and a sensitive animal soul, but that the place of the rational soul was supplied by God the Word; and that the divine nature in Christ performed the functions of reason and supplied the place of mind, the spiritual and intellectual principle in man.¹

Nestorius taught that the person of Jesus is only the instrument or the temple in which the divine Logos dwells. This controversy was of long continuance. Opposing councils were held and contending factions bit-

¹ See Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. IV, part ii, chap. v.

terly fought and disturbed the Church, each apparently caring more for victory over its opponents than for the truth. Nestorius was condemned and exiled without a hearing by the Council of Ephesus in the year 431. The sentence was severe; the condemnation was a travesty of justice and a reproach. At a later period his doctrines spread through Egypt, Syria, Arabia, India, Tartary, and parts of China.

The Nestorians at length formed their own church government and laws. Their doctrines were defined as follows: "That in the Saviour of the world there were two persons, of which one was divine, even the eternal Word, and the other, which was human, was the man Jesus; that these two persons had only one aspect; that the union between the Son of God and the Son of man was formed in the moment of the Virgin's conception, and was never to be dissolved; that it was not, however, a union of nature or of person, but only of will and affection; that Christ was therefore to be carefully distinguished from God, who dwelt in him as in his temple, and that Mary was to be called the mother of Christ and not the mother of God."¹

In violent opposition to the errors of Nestorius, Eutyches arose and, swinging to the other extreme in doctrine, founded a sect as prejudicial to the interests of the Christian Church and to truth as those he so strenuously condemned. He taught that in Christ there is but one nature, that of the incarnate Word. By this he was taught to deny the humanity of Christ. He was deposed and banished by the Emperor Marcian, and afterward condemned, in his absence, by the Council of Chalcedon, in 451. This Council enjoined upon all Christians as an article of faith almost the same formula

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. V, part ii, chap. v.

as had been given by the Council of Ephesus twenty years earlier: "That in Christ two distinct natures were united in one person, and that without any change, mixture, or confusion."¹

The views of the Monothelites were expressed in such ambiguous terms as to make it difficult at this day to understand exactly what they believed. Some say they taught that the human will in Christ was wholly swallowed up in the divine will; others, that it was so completely subservient to the divine will as always to move in unison with it. This sect arose through an effort of the Emperor Heraclius to bring together into the Eastern Church various dissenting sects. He attempted to do this by offering the compromise proposition, "That in Jesus Christ there was, after the union of the two natures, but one will and one operation." Heraclius published an edict favoring this doctrine, hoping thereby to establish peace. It was well received for a time, but opposition soon arose and rent the Church and the empire into two factions. The Monothelites were condemned by the sixth General Council.

During the Middle Ages the Church of Rome ruled with an iron hand. At the period of the Reformation, however, when the restraints of ecclesiastical authority were thrown off, the liberated mind, untaught and often prompted by prejudice and passion, adopted views which had no foundation in reason or in revelation. The ancient heresies as to the person of Christ were revived under new forms, and many others sprang up. There was a lamentable state of confusion on nearly every point of Christian doctrine.

In Germany and Holland the Anabaptists and Davidians had arisen, and invaded England in the reigns of

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. V, part ii, chap. v.

Henry VIII and Edward VI. They were revolutionists both as to Christian doctrine and civil government.

In opposition to these and their kind, and against the earlier heresies, the Church felt it needful to set forth her view of Christ which crystallized in this Article.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Son.

How is the name which distinguishes the second person in the Holy Trinity to be understood? The word has various significations in common language and in the Scriptures. It is in the latter applied to angels and believers. It is used metaphorically to indicate a disciple or follower. Paul speaks of Timothy as "my own son in the faith," and as "my dearly beloved son." Peter speaks of "Marcus my son." When applied to Christ it is used in a very definite and exclusive sense. When Jesus called himself the Son of God the Jews believed that he claimed Sonship in the sense of having equality of being with God.

The Messiah is designated in prophecy as the Son of God: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Psa. 2. 7, 12). Paul applies this directly to Jesus: "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13. 33). So also the Epistle to the Hebrews: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee" (Heb. 5. 5).

The inspired writers quote these words as proof-texts of the divine Sonship. This relationship Jesus claimed for himself; it was for this reason that the Jews accused him of blasphemy: "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5. 18). When Jesus was arrested and brought before the high priest for examination under oath he declared himself to be the Son of God: "The high priest . . . said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said. . . . Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy" (Matt. 26. 63-65). When he was brought before Pilate the charge laid against him was sedition and treason: "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king" (Luke 23. 2). "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar" (John 19. 12). The priests insisted that the death penalty be inflicted. Failing to bring him under the condemnation of the Roman law, they pleaded for his death under their own law: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19. 7). The law to which they referred was that against blasphemy (Lev. 24. 16), the penalty of which was death by stoning. Had the Jews been able to carry out their wishes they would have stoned Christ to death; not because he claimed to be the Messiah, but because he claimed to be the Son of God, and thus made himself equal with God.

When Jesus said, "I and my Father are one," they endeavored to put the law against blasphemy in force without trial. "Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (John 10. 31-33).

They attacked him also when he claimed preëxistence, saying, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad," and "Before Abraham was, I am." "Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple" (John 8. 59).

The Jews' fundamental error was the denial of the Deity of Jesus. When he said he was the Son of God they said he blasphemed, and for this they adjudged him worthy of death. They lacked the power, however, to take the law into their own hands. But Pilate was weak. He yielded to the priests' thinly veiled threats and wickedly condemned him to die for a crime of which he himself had declared him innocent. It does not appear that Pilate took cognizance of the charge of blasphemy or of its penalty. He wrote the accusation put on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (John 19. 19), as indicating treason to the empire of Rome.

The Jews generally understood that Messiahship implied Sonship or divinity, and the devout were waiting for the kingdom of God. They so understood the promises and prophecies. This knowledge became more positive and definite as they witnessed the miracles of Jesus and listened to his teaching. At his baptism, in fulfillment of prophecy (Psa. 2. 7), the divine Father bore

testimony to him as his own Son: "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3. 16, 17). John the Baptist, who witnessed this event, bore the same testimony: "And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1. 32-34).

The testimony of John must have been conclusive in the minds of the early disciples, as they were the disciples of John, and some of them were present when Christ was baptized. The next day John said to two of them, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). Almost immediately after came the testimony of Nathanael: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1. 49). Jesus is the Son of God in a unique sense. He is the "only begotten" Son. Yet, differing from all created beings who have their existence from God and their life in him, the Son being uncreated has life as the Father has life, in himself, not dependent, but self-existent and eternal.

Who is the Word of the Father.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1. 1). The Son is the Word of the Father; he was in the beginning with God; he was God. This clearly is to be identified as said of Christ. "He is therefore called the 'Word of God': in Greek, *Λόγος*, a word, or speech; because, as a man utters his mind by the words of his mouth, so

doth God reveal his will, and effect his pleasure, by his Son."¹ "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

In the Old Testament God is said to effect creation by his word: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Gen. 1. 3). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psa. 33. 6). In the New Testament God is said to have done this by his Son: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1. 3). "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1. 16, 17).

The very and eternal God.

The name Jehovah the Jews regarded with such reverence that they never pronounced it, but used a substitute. It implies self-existence, and is called the "incommunicable" name. This name, generally rendered LORD in the common version, is given to Jesus Christ: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. 40. 3). "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23. 6).

The attributes and moral excellencies ascribed to the Father are ascribed also to the Son. Is the Father eternal? So is the Son. God says, "I am the Lord, the first, and with the last" (Isa. 41. 4). And it is the Son

¹ Beveridge on the Articles, p. 72.

who says to John, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending" (Rev. 1. 8). The Father is almighty; so is the Son, "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1. 3). The Father is omnipresent; so is the Son. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 20). Does the Father know all things? So does the Son. "Lord, thou knowest all things" (John 21. 17). The Father made all things; the Son made all things (John 1. 3). Although in his humanity he was in all things made like unto his brethren, in his divinity he was in all things God. He was "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person" (Heb. 1. 3). "The communication of the divine essence which constitutes him Son," says Kidd, "is not to be thought of as an event which once took place; for then the Father would not have been always Father, nor the Son always Son. It is to be thought of rather as an 'eternal generation,' by which is meant an unchangeable relation or fact of the divine nature, the evidence of which is to be sought in what the Son has told us of the perfect intimacy between himself and the Father."¹ "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11. 27).

The facts of the Sonship and Deity of Christ are clearly stated in the Scriptures, and are proper objects of faith; the mysteries connected with the facts have never been revealed. As the narrative of our Lord's life draws nearer its end his declarations implying divinity are clearer and those of his disciples more positive. Peter announced belief in his Messiahship and Sonship at the

¹ On the Articles, vol. i, p. 71.

same time: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16. 16). After his resurrection the faith of the disciples was confirmed. It found expression in the declaration of Thomas: "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28). The doubts of Thomas were gone; he saw, he felt, he knew. That Thomas here recognized and acknowledged the divinity of Christ, which the whole Church acknowledges to-day, cannot well be doubted. Every chapter in the life of Jesus, his miraculous birth, his divine mission, his resurrection, and his ascension bore evidence to the disciples of his Deity. If they had not considered Christ "very and eternal God" they would not have given him the worship and prayer which properly belong only to Deity. When he stilled the waters with a word "they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14. 33). At his ascension from Mount Olivet the apostles who witnessed it "worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24. 52). After his enthronement Stephen saw him and prayed to him. "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. . . . And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7. 56, 59, 60).

The early Christians followed the example of the apostles. They accepted the doctrine of the Godhead of Christ and rendered him divine worship, pronouncing their benedictions in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Church fathers immediately succeeding the apostles bear clear testimony to the Sonship and Deity of Christ. Ignatius (A. D. 30-107) wrote: "I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you

such wisdom, . . . being fully persuaded, in very truth, with respect to our Lord Jesus Christ, that he was the Son of God, 'the firstborn of every creature,' God the Word, the only begotten Son."¹ Irenæus (A. D. 120-202) wrote: "He who 'was not born either by the will of the flesh, or by the will of man,' is the Son of man, this is Christ, the Son of the living God."²

The Deity of Christ shines through the purity of his life and character. He lived in an impure age, surrounded by the vile and profligate, and yet boldly challenges his enemies to convince him of sin (John 8. 46). He stood in striking contrast to the men of his time. The Gentiles were without God and without hope in the world, and the Jews had set aside the commandments of God for their own traditions. The degradation of the age indicates that the last vestige of the primitive religion given in Eden had been lost. The emperors of Rome and the imperial princes were worshiped as deities.

In the midst of such vileness Jesus was a sublime object of worship. He was light in darkness and purity amid gross immorality and vice. The sinlessness of the man surrounded by sin and sinners of the most aggressive type is a proof of the man's divinity. "The Church with her eye upon the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, could never have raised Jesus to the full honors of divinity had he been merely a man. And Christianity from the first has proclaimed herself, not the authoress of an apotheosis, but the child and product of an incarnation."³ The purity of Christ was in a large degree perpetuated in the lives of his followers. Gibbon, who was no friend to Christ, attributed the rapid spread of Christianity to "the pure and austere morals of the early Christians."

¹ Epistle to the Smyrnæans, chap. i. ² Against Heresies, book iii, chap. xix.

³ Liddon, Lectures, p. 27.

Hope in Christ is an inspiration to purity of life. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3. 2, 3).

Of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin.

The incarnation is foretold in the Old Testament: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7. 14). Its fulfillment, as an historical fact, is told by the evangelists. Closing his account of the birth of Jesus, Matthew refers to this prophecy: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1. 22, 23).

The incarnation is the permanent assumption of human nature and form by a divine personage. The early theologians, who attempted to explain the incarnation, were grappling with difficulties the human mind can never solve. They were beyond their depth. The incarnation of God in Christ is a mystery which God has not revealed. The facts of the incarnation are matters of faith; the unsolved and unsolvable mysteries of its operation must be left with God. They are the "secret things" that belong to him.¹

Two whole and perfect natures.

The Godhead and Manhood, each a whole and perfect nature, were joined together in one person, and that person was the Christ, the Son of God. Proofs of his divinity have been given, and evidences of the perfections of his manhood are stated by the evangelists. He was

¹ See *The Incarnation and Recent Criticism*, by R. J. Cooke, D.D.

a man in every particular, of "a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2. 16).

It commends itself to human reason that the Divine One should assume the nature of the beings he came to save. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2. 17).

Having adopted that form of redemption, it "behooved him," it was fitting, suitable, or necessary, that he be like his brethren in body and soul, in birth, pain, and death, that in the divine-human Jesus a genuine human sympathy might exist. It was not the Deity assuming in his own nature the conceptions and feelings of man, but He by whom all worlds were made, coequal and co-eternal with the Father, was made Man, perfect in body and soul, that in man's own nature the Deity might possess the conceptions and feelings of humanity, "that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

The incarnation lies at the foundation of the work of redemption. It was a means to an end. That end was the salvation of men. Bethlehem was the way to Calvary, and the triumphant cry, "It is finished," was but an echo of the angels' song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." "The incarnation," says Pope, "is not so much one of the stages or acts of the Redeemer's history as the necessary basis of all."¹

¹ Theology, vol. ii, p. 143.

There was in Christ a complete likeness to man. He was a perfect man in body, soul, and spirit. He was born of the Virgin Mary; emphatically, "the seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head." He grew, and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2. 52). He was hungry and thirsty; he was worn and weary, and slept; he was tempted and tried in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He called himself "the Son of man." He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from him."

Some of the early and even some of the modern theologians restrict the humanity of Jesus to his body. It has been said that the theory of the incarnation which makes him the possessor of a human soul is "without a single express scriptural statement in its support, and is without analogue or parallel in human mental philosophy."¹ If he were destitute of a human soul he could not have been a complete man, "made like unto his brethren." The attributes of the soul were apparent in his intercourse with men. He increased in wisdom, which could not be said of the Deity. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him" (Luke 2. 40). He received knowledge as all men do, but with less hindrance, as his mind was not clouded by sin and his intuitions were broader and deeper. He manifested joy in contemplation of the goodness of God. He manifested sorrow of spirit over the erring and the lost, and sympathy with the suffering and sorrowful. And at the climax of his own bitter anguish he cried, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me" (Matt. 26. 38). In that hour of deep mental and spir-

¹ Beecher, *Life of Christ*, p. 51.

itual distress, like other human souls, he yearned for companionship and sympathy.

Whether any other method could have been adopted to save man we cannot know. The resources of the Almighty are not limited, but it was by the incarnation that infinite wisdom chose to act. The plan of the incarnation was formed in eternity, when the Son of God was in the fullness of his glory with the Father; and the redemption of man, for which man's nature was assumed, was effected when the Son, "found in fashion as a man," "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Never to be divided.

The eternality of the union of God and man in the incarnation is one of the profoundest themes of religion. It is the exaltation of human nature, in the person of Jesus Christ, to the everlasting throne of God. The majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom is thus declared. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (Psa. 45. 6). "It is the infinite condescension of the Son of God," says Pope, "and the glory of man that the union of the two natures in Christ is permanent. He became man once for all; our manhood is a vesture which he will not fold and lay aside. Immanuel is his name forever."¹

Christ "ever liveth," Paul declares, "to make intercession" for us. "This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10. 12). "It is true, Saint Paul speaks as if Christ's mediatory office and kingdom were to cease after the day of judgment, and that then he was to deliver up all to the Father. But though, when the full number of the elect shall be gathered, the full end of his death will be attained; and when these saints shall be

¹ Theology, vol. ii, p. 141.

glorified with him and by him, his office as Mediator will naturally come to an end; yet his own personal glory shall never cease: and if every saint shall inherit an everlasting kingdom, much more shall he who has merited all that to them, and has conferred it on them, be forever possessed of his glory.”¹

The surrender of the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ to God the Father will perhaps be the last act in the scheme of redemption (1 Cor. 15. 24-28). When Christ has “put down all rule and all authority and power,” and the empire of Death is disrupted, the righteous saved, the wicked punished, and the providence of God approved, then shall the mediatorial office cease as being no longer needed, and all shall return to the absolute government of God. “That God may be all in all,” Jesus Christ will retain in blessed union his body, his divinity, and his soul forever and ever as the one who redeemed mankind.

Who truly suffered.

The writings of the prophets show very clearly that the promised Messiah was to lead a life of suffering and to die an ignominious death. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is so full of prediction, as to the life, character, treatment, sufferings, and death of Jesus Christ, as to convince the mind that no other career could have been in the intention of the Holy Inspirer of the prophet.

Jesus himself said, “It is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught” (Mark 9. 12). The Spirit of God by the mouth of the prophets “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1. 11). After his resurrection Jesus declared to the disciples the necessity of his sufferings. “O fools, and slow of heart to

¹ Burnet on the Articles, p. 64.

believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24. 25, 26.) So Paul taught that "Christ must needs have suffered" (Acts 17. 3). In Gethsemane and on Calvary the weight of a world's guilt lay upon Christ which must be borne without help from God or man. There was an intensity of anguish, an awful mystery of suffering, and this was not in appearance only. Those who hold that his body was a mere phantom must believe that he did not "truly" suffer. Those who scourged and crowned him with thorns, and crucified him, had abundant evidence of the substantiality of his body and the reality of his sufferings.

No view of the sufferings of Christ is in any sense adequate that does not regard them as endured by the incarnate Son of God. Are these sufferings of Christ to be attributed to his humanity alone? So long as there is an unrevealed mystery in the incarnation of the Son of God, so long will there be mystery as to the nature and extent of the sufferings of the Son of man. "With the doctrine of a union of the divine and human natures in a unity of personality in Christ, and that in the incarnation he was truly the *God-man*, we know not either the theology or philosophy which may limit his sufferings to a mere human consciousness. . . . The divine Son incarnate, and so incarnate in human nature as to unite it with himself in personal unity, could suffer and did suffer in the redemption of the world."¹

Pope's opinion is that Jesus suffered more than any mortal has ever known. "His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death. This was the penalty of human sin: not the destruction of soul

¹ Miley on Atonement, p. 278.

and body merely, but that severance of the spirit from God the uttermost terrors of which no mortal has ever known. It was this which our Lord underwent."¹

Was crucified, dead, and buried.

The actual death of Christ's body is a crucial fact; for there must be a known death before a resurrection can be shown. His death took place at the time of the Passover. He was crucified at Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, on Mount Calvary, a public place of execution. His sufferings were protracted for several hours. He hung upon the cross, elevated to the public gaze. Jew and Gentile, Jewish priest and Roman soldier, friend and foe, were witnesses of his death. The soldiers to hasten death broke the legs of the two thieves. But when they came to Jesus they "saw that he was dead already." "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water" (John 19. 34). This was a known sign of death in human bodies.

It was sometimes the case that the Romans forbade the taking down of the bodies of the crucified for burial; they were allowed to remain until they were destroyed by the elements or devoured by birds of prey. The governor of the province, however, could give the privilege of burial. Joseph of Arimathea "went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus, . . . and laid it in his own new tomb" (Matt. 27. 58).

To be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.²

¹Theology, vol. ii, p. 159.

²The Anglican Article reads, "for *all* actual sins of men." The Methodist Article omits the word "*all*." We cannot find it in any edition of the Articles. Its omission from some editions of the Book of Common Prayer has a singular history. It was omitted without authority in order to force the Article into agreement with the Calvinistic theory of "particular redemption"—that Christ died, not for *all*, but only for the elect. Hardwick says the omission appears as early as 1630. That the Calvinistic divines considered the word objectionable is shown by the fact that it is wanting in the Articles as revised by them in 1643. It was afterward inserted and is now in the Book of Common Prayer. With the word "*all*," the Article asserts the universality of redemption. See Hardwick, Gibson, and Green on the Articles.

The Article concludes with a statement of the object of Christ's death: "To reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men."

In both ancient and modern times there have been religious sects who have denied that any propitiatory sacrifice was either needed or made. The position taken by them may be thus stated: That Christ is not truly divine, but that he is in a subordinate sense the Son of God; that his word and life are a practical help for human salvation; that he is Saviour in that he illustrates eternal principles of right. They deny the total moral depravity of human nature. On such a theory atonement for sin is impossible and unnecessary; for if Christ be not divine no adequate atonement has been made, and if man be not a sinner, and in a condition beyond self-recovery, he needs neither atonement nor Saviour.

Doubtless the influence of Christ's teaching and example in the elevation of mankind is wide, and the stimulus his life gives to virtuous living is strong, but it is by his death alone that men are saved. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2. 9). Under the Levitical law the sacrifice was offered "to bear away sin," and Jesus was "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He gave himself to "redeem us from all iniquity." When we were alienated from God by inherited tendencies to sin, and were enemies by "wicked works," "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5. 10).

There are various theories of the atonement of Christ. Those who accept it in its essence will agree on these points: Sin was rebellion against God's righteous gov-

ernment, the law was broken, and man was helpless to propitiate God or to offer ransom. God could not maintain the integrity of his moral government and dispense with propitiation. The propitiatory sacrifice was therefore provided. God provided himself a lamb from his own fold, "the Lamb of God," who by expiation should take away the sin of the world. In this plan the Father and the Son were in full accord. There were not two wills, the Father demanding justice and the Son pleading for mercy for a lost race. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3. 16). "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10. 11). It will be wise on the part of man to accept the benefit of Christ's atonement by performing the conditions on which it is offered without questioning the exact manner in which it was procured.

ARTICLE III

OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was prepared by the English Reformers and first published in 1553, as the fourth of the Forty-two Articles. It passed into the Thirty-nine Articles without change and was adopted by Wesley in his abridgment in 1784. It is a restatement of the fundamental doctrine of the Apostles' Creed, and we can trace no change that alters the sense from its first appearance to the present day.

II. THE AIM

The Article follows in natural order that on the humanity of Christ. But the structure of the Article is such as to lay stress on the fact of the resurrection less for its own sake than with a view to asserting the reality of the manhood of our Lord, now risen and ascended. Such diverse views were held in regard to the human nature of Christ that the difference must needs influence views of his resurrection, ascension, and glorification. The Article is a reassertion of the perfection of the Saviour's manhood.

At the time the Article was being prepared and published the Anabaptists were making great disturbance in the religious world. They contended that the flesh

of Christ never had been that of a created being, and after his resurrection was so deified as to lose all semblance to humanity. This Article would therefore define the views held by the English divines on this vital question, and be a barrier to the spread of error. It is probable that it was formulated with some reference to certain points in controversy as to the nature of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In 1550 the German and Swiss schools of theology were striving for supremacy in England. The Germans contended for consubstantiation, or "the actual reception with the mouth of the glorified body of Christ present in the bread, and of his real blood."¹ This of necessity carried with it the ubiquity of his body.

The Swiss school prevailed. The Westminster divines adopted Calvin's views of the sacrament, and this Article insists that our Lord went into heaven and there reigns, in all respects perfect in his manhood, yet subject to the limitations of humanity. He could be no more ubiquitous than omniscient without destroying his true and perfect manhood.

III. THE EXPOSITION

In the consideration of the second Article we have seen that Jesus Christ "was crucified, dead, and buried." Death has been defined in ancient and modern times as the separation of soul and body. Tertullian says, "As death is defined to be nothing else than the separation of body and soul, life, which is the opposite of death, is susceptible of no other definition than the conjunction of body and soul."² Cicero defines death as "the departure of the mind from the body." Modern writers more frequently say it does not consist in this separation, but

¹ Hagenbach, *History of Doctrine*, vol. ii, p. 309.

² *Treatise on the Soul*, chap. xxvii.

the separation is the consequence of death; but in either case it implies that the soul exists when the body perishes, and this is the teaching of the Word of God.

When the divine Saviour cried, "It is finished," and "bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19. 30), or dismissed his own spirit, where did he go? We have the words of Christ himself to the repentant dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23. 43).

On the third day the soul of Jesus returned again, entered the same body, and he arose from the dead and made himself known unto the disciples. The time of suffering and ignominy was now past, and the time of glory and triumph commenced. A parallel is suggested between his humiliation and his exaltation. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 8). His body was committed to the tomb, and his soul went into Hades, or the place of departed spirits. In this he followed step by step all humankind, through death, the grave, and the separate existence of the soul in the place to which God has assigned it. But, his work being now done, his humiliation ended, his exaltation commenced. "His soul was not left in hell (Hades), neither his flesh did see corruption" (Acts 2. 3). He was exalted to rise from the dead: a wonderful exaltation from the bruised, mangled dead body of the Son of man, that lay in Joseph's tomb, to the resurrected body of the Son of God. He was again exalted in that he ascended to heaven, with all the perfections of man's nature now glorified; and the climax of his exaltation and glory was reached when he "sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12. 2)—from the deepest humiliation to the highest glory.

Christ did truly rise again from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ is a most important part of the Christian's creed. Immediately after it occurred the apostles proclaimed it. It was not an afterthought to assist in carrying out an imposition. The apostles were not expecting it, though Christ had definitely told them it must occur. They had not understood the meaning of his words, or their faith was too weak to grasp the possibility of the stupendous miracle involved. It was a surprise to them, and they received the first report of it as "idle tales." The resurrection of Christ was the inspiration of the second movement in the spread and establishment of the Christian religion. The interval between the death and resurrection of Christ was very brief: "the third day he rose from the dead"; but the hopes of the apostles had died and were buried with their dead Master. "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24. 21). If there had been no resurrection there would have been no gospel or Christian system. Peter's exclamation indicated the revival of a hope that was dead: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1. 3). It was the basis of apostolic preaching on the day of Pentecost. "Him . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2. 23, 32). Peter and John healed the lame man by the power of the "Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3. 15). As a summary of the work of God in the first flush of victory it is said, "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great

grace was upon them all" (Acts 4. 33). Paul laid great emphasis upon it, putting it as the keystone of the Christian arch, so that on it hangs the whole system of Christian truth: "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15. 16, 17). This emphasis indicates its importance and that some wished to discredit it.

The Sadducees denied all resurrection, and would strenuously deny the resurrection of Christ, because to establish it would be the overthrow of their whole system of belief. The Essenes, another sect of the Jews, believed in the immortality of the soul but denied the resurrection of the body. Some were found in the church in Corinth who said, "There is no resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. 15. 12), and others "erred concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. 2. 18). These errors arising in apostolic times would be likely to be perpetuated to a later period. In post-apostolic times the humanity of Christ was more frequently assailed than was his divinity, and these errors followed to their logical conclusion would involve serious error in regard to his resurrection. One of the principal doctrines of the Manichees was that, "In obedience to the divine command, Christ appeared among the Jews clothed with the shadowy form of a human body, and not with the real substance, and he demonstrated his divine mission by stupendous miracles."¹

Some of these errors had appeared in Saint John's time, and he condemned them as antichrist: "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. III, part ii, chap. v.

in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4. 2, 3).

Tertullian alludes to this passage in writing against these early heretics, and gives this comment: "Surely he is antichrist who denies that Christ has come in the flesh. By declaring that his flesh is simply and absolutely true, and taken in the plain sense of its own nature, *the Scripture* aims a blow at all who make distinctions in it. Quite the same way, also, when it defines the very Christ to be but one, it shakes the fancies of those who exhibit a multiform Christ, who made Christ to be one being and Jesus another—representing one as escaping out of the midst of the crowds, and the other as detained by them; one as appearing on a solitary mountain to three companions, clothed with glory in a cloud, the other as an ordinary man holding intercourse with all; one as magnanimous, but the other as timid; lastly, one as suffering death, the other as risen again, by means of which event they maintain a resurrection of their own also, only in another flesh."¹ The same author writes against those who affirm that the flesh of Christ "sits in heaven void of sensation, like a sheath only, Christ being withdrawn from it."

All who denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh, or taught that his body was a phantom, "a shadowy form," must also deny his resurrection and the ascension of a human body to heaven. It seems superfluous to quote all or the greater part of the passages in the Bible that assert the resurrection of Christ; they will readily come to mind. All the evangelists bear unequivocal testimony to the fact of the resurrection of Christ. He predicted his own resurrection: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem;

¹ The Flesh of Christ, chap. xxiv.

and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matt. 20. 18, 19).

While the evangelists did not see Christ rise, they had the most conclusive evidence of his resurrection in that they saw him dead and afterward saw him alive. "There were twelve distinct appearances of Christ after his burial—five on the first day, and five more before the ascension, and once to Saul at his conversion, and once to John on Patmos (1 Cor. 15. 5-9; Acts 9. 5; Rev. 1. 9-18). These were at different hours of the day, at different places, and, on one occasion, to above five hundred persons."¹ These appearances were not in dreams or visions of the night, but at times and circumstances when every faculty of the mind would be alert. He talked and ate with them, showed them his hands and feet; he challenged Thomas to put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side (John 20. 19-27). It is with the utmost propriety that the historian calls these "infallible proofs."

The fact of the resurrection of Christ, so important to the establishment of the Christian faith, was thus wonderfully guarded and is proved by the most indisputable evidence; so that to accept it is most reasonable, and to deny it and accept any other hypothesis is the most unreasonable credulity. It was the plan of infinite wisdom that the system of religion which was to bring man into close relation with the supernatural and the divine, and reveal God to his consciousness, should have as its foundation the most stupendous miracle, the incarnation and resurrection, in which the power of the divine and

¹ Binney, Compend, p. 46.

the exaltation of the human should be closely related. "The dogma of the resurrection is the proof of all other dogmas, the foundation of our Christian life and hope, the soul of the entire apostolic preaching, the corner stone on which the Church is built."¹

The history of redemption gives us a sublime fact on the most incontrovertible evidence of an actual and literal resurrection as the consummation of the grand redemptive work of the Son of God, and this fact is pointed to as the assurance of the resurrection of all men. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. 15. 20-22).

What a glorious truth is here asserted! Not only is Christ risen, but he is the first fruits of them that have slept; the first sheaf gathered from the great harvest field; the first trophy won from death's dominions; the beginning of a long line of those destined to arise out of death's sleep to life eternal. The great head of humanity leads the way up from the tomb and opens the gate for all our race. As the first sheaf gathered and presented, under the Mosaic law, as a thank offering to God was the pledge and assurance of the ingathering of the whole harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is a pledge and proof of the resurrection of his people.

The tomb of Christ with the dead body in it, resting in gloom and silence, and the stone and seal shutting out, apparently forever, the light of hope, is a fitting finality to the dispensation of law. It was all that it could do. Up to that hour the grave had never been opened by a true resurrection. But the dispensation of

¹ Christlieb, *Modern Doubt*, p. 448.

grace had come. The seal of the Jewish Sanhedrin, dashed to pieces by the rising Son of God, is an emblem of the wreck of the Jewish polity and the destruction of its ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The new dispensation opens by the bursting of a sealed tomb; by the assertion of divine over human and Satanic authority; by the bringing life out of death, and by the restoration of the shattered hopes of mankind.

The resurrection of Christ is often used to impress spiritual and experimental truth upon the hearts of believers, so that a proper consideration of his resurrection, and a firm faith in it as a great historical fact and a sublime doctrine of the Scriptures, might have a salutary effect upon our moral and spiritual life. "Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6. 4). There must be a spiritual resurrection of the soul before there can be a glorious resurrection of the body.

And took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature.

The nature of Christ's resurrection body has been "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" in both ancient and modern times. In the apostolic and post-apostolic age the old philosophy that matter was the source of evil could not be easily eradicated and was often mixed with erroneous views of Christianity. Some would not believe Jesus Christ had any substantial body, and believed that during his ministry he taught his disciples "how to disentangle the rational soul from the corrupt body and to conquer the violence of malignant matter."¹

In modern times there are some of the rationalistic school and some even among orthodox Christians whose

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. III, part ii, chap. v.

faith is staggered at the scriptural account of the bodily resurrection of Christ; and they seek to diminish its importance. Christ himself made it emphatic and positive: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen" (Rev. 1. 18). So the apostles laid stress on the bodily resurrection of Christ; and later believers or unbelievers cannot displace it. Some say the death of Christ was apparent and not real, and the resurrection was but a recovery from a swoon or trance. Others teach that, while the apostles' belief in the resurrection of Christ was a real belief, it was based upon visions received by the disciples. A singular view is held by the Swedenborgians. They teach that the literal body is dissolved and perishes at death, and that a psychical luminous body is eliminated at once, so that the soul does not go forth from its tabernacle of flesh a bare power of thought. They teach that this kind of resurrection takes place in every case at death and this kind of body clothes the soul in the spirit world. They must be classed with those "who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. 2. 18).

All objections arise because of the miraculous power involved. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26. 8.) The whole system of Christianity is founded upon miracle. The difficulties involved weigh nothing against Omnipotence. The Article stands upon the description which Christ himself gives of his resurrection body, and is perfectly consistent with it. It was the same body which was crucified and laid in Joseph's tomb, for it bore the marks of his passion. The test demanded by Thomas and granted by Christ is conclusive: "Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands;

and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (John 20. 27, 28). The voice that had often cheered the soul of Mary she knew when in familiar tones the Saviour called her name. When he came into the assembly of the disciples they supposed they had seen a spirit. "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet" (Luke 24. 38, 39).

These passages show that the body of the burial was the body of the resurrection, a real body, capable of conversation, of eating and drinking, and of being touched, felt, and handled, and therefore having "all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature." There are other statements that involve mysteries not easily explained. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side" (John 20. 19, 20). Doors or walls were no barrier to his movements.

In this bodily state, whatever it was, he lived forty days, during which time at intervals he appeared to and conversed with his disciples. At one time his bodily substance would appear as real and solid, and in all things like that of those with whom he conversed; at other times it appeared to be above the laws that govern solid bodies. He appeared to the eleven and those with them in a familiar form, with marks of his passion visible and

tangible. "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country" (Mark 16. 12). He was not bound down to the limits of space or the known laws that govern matter. He sat with them at the table, he took bread and broke it and gave to them, and then "he vanished out of their sight" (Luke 24. 31).

These statements have constrained some to regard the accounts as contradictory. So Strauss says, "A body which can be felt cannot pass through shut doors, and, *vice versa*, a body which without hindrance passes through boards cannot have bones, nor a stomach to digest bread and broiled fish."¹ These things, however, are no more mysterious than the miracles wrought by Jesus when he was alive, but they cannot be accounted for upon any known laws. God has brought the facts to our knowledge through the medium of the New Testament writers, but the mysteries remain with himself. The end of the Saviour's earthly career is no more wonderful than its beginning, and the body of his resurrection is no more mysterious than the body of his birth. "Like every primal generation, the nature of the resurrection body of Him who was 'the first fruits of them that slept' must remain a mystery. We cannot form any clear conception of the process by which the dead body of Christ was transmuted into a glorified body, nor can we understand the nature of the latter."²

Strange changes take place under the operation of natural laws. The dark fluid becomes transparent glass by heat, the black charcoal a brilliant diamond by a different arrangement of particles; the dried and shriveled bulb placed in the blackest soil sends up a pure and beautiful white lily. And thus the glorified body of Christ

¹ Strauss, p. 295.

² Christlieb, *Modern Doubt*, p. 475.

was not altered as regards its fundamental components; it was the same body, with the marks of the nails and the wound in its side, but in a new spiritual form of existence, and standing under other laws. "It therefore appears until the ascension, when its transformation was completed, as an elementary, earthly, material body; but its elements are no longer bound by space, and it can go here or there, make itself visible or invisible—in fact, shape itself outwardly according to the internal will. And this is possible because the body is spiritualized through and through; it has become an expression of the spirit, and its willing instrument. . . . This is what the Scriptures call a 'spiritual body,' *σῶμα πνευματικόν*, in contradistinction to the natural body, *σῶμα ψυχικόν*."¹

In the glorified spiritual body of Christ we see what the human body can become, and this marks a glorious destiny for man. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 49). "It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15. 43, 44). Heaven is the home of the glorified: "From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. 3. 21).

It has been observed that there is an apparent contradiction in the statements of the resurrection of Christ, in that the exercise of power in his resurrection is attributed to the Father and also to the Son. Paul ascribes it to the Father: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the

¹ Christlieb, *Modern Doubt*, pp. 475-76.

working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (Eph. 1. 19, 20). "Paul, an apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead") (Gal. 1. 1). Here Paul teaches plainly that the Father raised Christ from the dead. But Jesus said that he possessed the resurrection power and by that would rise from the dead: "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5. 21). "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But he spake of the temple of his body" (John 2. 19, 21). "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. . . . I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10. 17, 18). He voluntarily laid down his life when he said, "It is finished," and dismissed his own spirit, and he took it again when he burst the sealed tomb and showed himself to be "the resurrection and the life." Nothing short of omnipotence could have performed the miracle. The Father is omnipotent, so are the Son and the Holy Ghost, and the resurrection of Christ was by the power and act of the Triune God.

Wherewith he ascended into heaven.

The ascension of Christ is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. The ascension was a necessary consequence of the resurrection. If Christ had remained on earth for a time and died again, as Lazarus and others must have done, or had he disappeared from view without human knowledge, the resurrection as an evidence of divine power would have passed for nothing. His ascension, like his resurrection, rests on sufficient trustworthy evidence. The place whence he ascended and the time it occurred are definitely named, and he went up in the sight of numerous witnesses.

Had the apostles reason to expect their Lord would thus leave the earth? His ascension was as much foretold as his resurrection. They were slow to understand the prophecies that pointed to the sufferings and death of the Messiah, or to a spiritual kingdom. Many of these were hard to be understood until the event predicted occurred. "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men" (Psa. 68. 18). The twenty-fourth psalm is regarded by some as Messianic and has reference to the ascension of Christ, representing his triumphant entrance to heaven: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory" (Psa. 24. 9, 10).

The ascension was prefigured in the patriarchal dispensation by the translation of Enoch (Gen. 5. 24; Heb. 11. 5), and in the Jewish by the translation of Elijah (2 Kings 2. 11), so that each of the three dispensations has had a visible proof of the immortal destiny of human nature. It was prefigured in the Mosaic ritual. The high priest under the law was the express type of the Messiah and his priestly office. He entered the Holy of Holies once a year to make atonement for sin. The Holy of Holies was to the Jews a type of the highest heaven. Jesus Christ is our High Priest, and "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9. 11, 12). Jesus predicted his own ascension: "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6. 62.) "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20. 17). Testimony after

the event is very clear and definite: "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven" (Mark 16. 19). "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24. 51). "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1. 9).

The Lord Jesus remained on earth forty days after his resurrection. Though we cannot know the object in the mind of Christ for his continuance with his disciples for that length of time, we can see a fourfold result. He put his resurrection beyond any reasonable doubt; he gave them instruction in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God; he prepared them for his invisible government of the Church, and inspired them with true missionary zeal.

We need not wonder at the fuller development of the Christian system after his ascension. We may not be able to trace all things found in the epistles back to the sayings of Christ in the gospels, but we have a solid foundation for doctrine in the unwritten sayings of Christ given when, after his resurrection, he talked with them "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1. 3). Luke gives us a circumstantial account of the ascension: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany," probably from Jerusalem. There is no record of the conversation during the journey, but the sublime ending of it is supplied by inspiration: "And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them." What a supreme moment to him, to them! His earthly career was ended, his sufferings were past and his triumphs begun. He would now "ascend up where he was before," and resume the glory which he had with the Father "before the world was." He would leave the world and return to the Father to

receive the throne and the crown. This was the "glory" that should follow his "sufferings" (1 Pet. 1. 11). To his disciples it was a supreme moment. All doubt was dissipated, faith was lost in sight, and hope in fruition; they had received many "infallible proofs"; a blessed oneness of faith, hope, and holy purpose dwelt in their hearts, and bound them together. His last words were words of blessing—a scene of blessing without anything to awaken pity or distress. That of Jacob blessing his twelve sons was patriarchal and grand, that of Joseph blessing his son and giving directions concerning his bones was pathetic, but this surpasses all others; they stood on the verge of heaven. While blessing them, with hands uplifted, "he was parted from them," not suddenly, as when he "vanished out of their sight," but slowly, his last words uttered in midair; the attractive force of heaven was greater than that of earth, and he went up, up, "and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1. 9). "And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24. 52). He was their Lord and their God, before whom all moral intelligences must bow.

The ascension of Christ is a blessed fact and has its particular use. Christ ascended—"1. That he might receive and bestow gifts upon men (Psa. 68. 18). 2. That he might open a new way to his kingdom and glory (Heb. 10. 20). 3. That he might prepare a place for his children (John 14. 3). 4. That he might ever live to be a faithful high priest to make intercession for his people."¹

The ascension and entrance into glory were the sequel to his humiliation and suffering. The contemplation of them had been a source of strength to him in his life: "Who

¹ Jameson, Notes on the Twenty-five Articles, pp. 107, 108.

for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12. 2). The position of honor and dignity he would occupy was foretold by the prophets: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psa. 110. 1). Christ applied this to himself (Matt. 22. 44), and it is quoted by the apostle as describing the superiority of Christ to all created beings (Heb. 1. 13). "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8. 1). This indicated the highest honor, glory, and dominion of Christ.

All this is said of the glorified human nature of Christ. As the Son of God coequal with the Father there could be no exaltation, but as the God-Man there could be. Through the union of the divine and human natures the ineffable glory of the Deity had been veiled from all creatures. John said, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14). It was not the glory of the Triune God, but the glory of the only begotten of the Father. As God-Man and Mediator he occupied officially a position inferior to the Father. He had voluntarily humbled himself and taken the place of sinful man, and therefore God had now beyond conception exalted his human soul and body.

And there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

The return of Christ to the earth is distinctly foretold, and the purpose of his coming is specifically described: "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 3). "He which was

ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10. 42). There is no discrepancy in the statements of Scripture when judgment is ascribed to the Father and also to the Son. God is "the Judge of all the earth." "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Psa. 58. 11). The judgment is called "the day of God" (2 Pet. 3. 12); "that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16. 14). When God is thus generally spoken of we must understand God the Father or the Trinity. A future judgment was foretold: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12. 14). It is described in language that indicates the greatest catastrophe the world can undergo: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (2 Pet. 3. 10, 12).

Nothing more terrible than is here foreshadowed can come to the earth. Its elements will melt with fervent heat; the works of man will be burned up; his greatest monuments of stone, bronze, or iron, his greatest achievements in engineering, will be as tow in the great conflagration.

Of the Judge who will preside at that great assize we cannot be in doubt when the Person of the Son is spoken of in distinction from the Person of the Father: He who came to save us will also be our Judge. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5. 22). "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in

righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17. 31).

The place of the judgment is indicated by Saint Paul: "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 17). Aerial space is the place designated for the occurrence of the judgment, and this is favored by our Lord's account of his coming in the clouds of heaven. So it seems most probable the great white throne will be exalted above the earth. "The grand congregation of the judgment may be in pure space; for these resurrection bodies, absolved from the power of gravitation, and of power by pure volition, can tread upon a plane of pure space as easily as Jesus trod upon the sea, or as we tread upon a pavement."¹

The time of the coming of Christ and the judgment day God has wisely concealed: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13. 32).

The certainty and solemnity of the judgment should deeply impress us, and we would do well to make the just inference of Saint Peter our own: "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Pet. 3. 11.)

¹ Whedon, in loco.

ARTICLE IV

OF THE HOLY GHOST

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

I. THE ORIGIN

The personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost are asserted in the Augsburg Confession, but no statement is made of the "procession." The divines who prepared the Württemberg Confession formulated this Article. It does not appear in the English Articles of Edward VI, but was taken from the Confession of Württemberg by Archbishop Parker, and put into the Elizabethan Articles in 1563, and without change passed into the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571, and into Wesley's abridgment in 1784.

II. THE AIM

In early Christian times, especially in the third and fourth centuries, so prolific of heresy and controversy, errors were taught in regard to the Holy Ghost. These in various forms have been perpetuated to the present time. The controversies occasioned by Arius in relation to the divinity of Christ were so bitter and extended that comparatively little was written concerning the third person of the Trinity. It can be readily seen that arguments disproving the divinity of the Son would also disprove the divinity of the Holy Ghost.

Arius, in the fourth century, is said to have taught that as the Son is the first and greatest creature of the Father, so the Holy Ghost is the first and greatest creature of

the Son; thus making him the creature of a creature.¹ Athanasius vehemently opposed this. "He appealed," says Hagenbach, "both to the declarations of Holy Writ and to the testimony of Christian consciousness. How can that which is not sanctified by anything else, which is itself the source of sanctification to all creatures, possess the same nature as those who are sanctified by it? We have fellowship with and participate in the divine life, by means of the divine Spirit, but this could not be if the Spirit were created by God. As certain as it is that through him we become partakers of the divine nature, so certain is it that he must himself be one with the divine being."² Photinus, a contemporary of them both, taught that the Holy Ghost was a celestial virtue proceeding from the Deity; Macedonius taught that it was a divine energy diffused throughout the universe. Both denied that it was a person distinct from the Father and the Son. These errors called for an authoritative statement of doctrine by the Church, and were condemned by the second General Council at Constantinople in the year 381. This Council guarded the orthodox view by amending the Creed, which the Council of Nice (325) had left imperfect, and added definite clauses to its statement of faith in the Holy Ghost. The older Creed read, "We believe . . . in the Holy Spirit." As amended it read, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets."

The period of the Reformation was full of controversy. The heresies of the fourth century were revived, and a deep anxiety was felt by those in authority to settle funda-

¹ Neander, *Church History*, vol. i, pp. 416-420

² *History of Doctrines*, vol. i, p. 260.

mentals. The Arians and the Anabaptists denied the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost. Several minor sects, too, held that God was but one person as well as one essence. These various heresies had obtained such a following that the Reformers seem to have felt it advisable, even though it implied some repetition, to enunciate a particular Article to add to, and supplement beyond all question, the reference to the third person in the Godhead in the first Article. This opinion crystallized in this Article. The necessity for it is indicated by the persistence of the sects against which it was aimed, and the pertinacity with which these errors continued to reappear from time to time, under new forms.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century the Socinians made their appearance—a sect which exerted a wide influence in some portions of Europe. They taught that Jesus Christ was a mere man, that the term Holy Ghost as used in the Scriptures was a designation of God's energy when exercised in a particular way. This is now the opinion of nearly or quite all modern Unitarians and Rationalists.

The Article condemned ancient heresies, and antagonized those existing when it was adopted. It has guarded the Church against those that arose later, and has a proper place among the symbols of our faith to-day.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Procession

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

The casual reader would not imagine what a long and bitter contention this clause occasioned between the two great divisions of the Christian Church. Its place in the

great doctrinal controversy makes its history peculiarly interesting.

The term "procession" is a legacy from the controversies of the fourth century, and it has survived as the term best fitted to guard the truth that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person. "The term was seized upon by the orthodox," says Kidd, "and applied to the Spirit by way of securing a double truth. On the one side, as against the statement that he is but a creature, it asserted his eternal derivation from the Father; and on the other, by contrast with the idea of generation, it maintained his distinction from the Son. What the word ultimately denotes we cannot know. To us it simply serves to defend what is an eternal fact in the divine nature as revealed in the Scriptures, that the Spirit is a divine Person; divine, as owing his being, like the Son, to an eternal relation with the Father, and a Person, as possessing it, equally with the Son, in a mode of his own."¹

On a preceding page have been cited the Creed as formulated by the Council of Nice, and the addition made by the Council of Constantinople of the words, "who proceedeth from the Father." After this change was made a question arose in the Latin Church as to whether the Scriptures do not represent the Holy Spirit as bearing the same relation to the Son as to the Father. The Latins for the most part affirmed this; the Greeks denied it, not so much because they deemed it heretical as that they opposed changes. One change led to another and ended in division. The Latins were aggressive and innovating, the Greeks conservative and satisfied with the Creed as left by the great Councils. However, in the year 518, at a local Spanish Council in Toledo, the words "and the Son" (*filioque*) were added to the Constantino-

¹ Thirty-nine Articles, vol. I, p. 91.

politan Creed, making the clause read, "who proceedeth from the Father and the Son."

This famous *filioque* clause gave great offense to the Greeks, who violently opposed it. It ultimately led to the rending of the Church in two, East and West, or Greek and Latin, and for nearly a thousand years appeared to the contending parties a justifiable cause for separation. The clause had won general acceptance in the Latin Church at the middle of the ninth century, when, during the pontificate of Nicholas I, it was adopted at Rome.

The controversy was then suspended to again become bitter in the eleventh century. It was revived by Cærularius, patriarch of Constantinople, and by Leo IX, Pope of Rome, who, as its leaders, used every artifice ambition and cunning could invent to destroy each other. Leo excommunicated the Greek Churches; the Pope's legates to Constantinople excommunicated Cærularius and his adherents; these in turn excommunicated the Latins. This completed the schism between the Latin and Greek Churches, which has never been healed. A temporary compromise was effected at the Council of Florence in 1439 by the adoption of the wording, "the Spirit proceeding from the Father through the Son." This was brought about by fraud rather than by argument or conciliation. The Byzantine emperor, John Palæologus, desired it, that the influence of the West might strengthen his falling empire against the Turks. Pope Eugenius IV desired it to extend his power over the East as well as over the West. It was not unanimously approved. There were many dissentients among the Greeks, who deemed those of their own number who signed it traitors to orthodoxy. It was finally rejected by both parties. It is usually held by the English divines that, while the

filoque clause expresses a scriptural truth, its insertion in the Creed without ecumenical authority was not justifiable. In its amended form the Creed is now held both by the Roman Church and by Protestants.

Such, in brief, is the history of this famous schism. Its consequences have been disastrous to the peace of the Church and of the world. The controversies it occasioned at the Council of Florence, probably, contributed to the fall of the Byzantine empire in 1453 and the acquisition of Constantinople by the Turks. Thus the sacred places of the East, where the first triumphs of the cross were achieved, are held by the followers of the "false prophet," who throw dust in the air, spit on the ground, and blaspheme when the name of Christ is uttered. The division of the Church has had much to do with the present status of the nations. In the East it has never been forgiven or forgotten. It has intensified the bigotry of the Greek Church and inflamed the zeal of the Russians to make the Greek the Church of the whole world.

The Scripture proof of the twofold procession can be easily stated. The third person in the Holy Trinity is designated by the term "Spirit." The term not only indicates the nature of his essence, but expresses the relation he holds to the Father and the Son, and also the peculiar mode of his operation in the Church and in the world. The terms "Spirit," "Holy Spirit," "Spirit of God," "Spirit of the Son" are applied to him to show his relation to the first and second persons in the Holy Trinity. It will be seen that the relation in both cases is the same. The identical phraseology is used in both instances. He is called "the Spirit of the Father" (Matt. 10. 20), and "the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead" (Rom. 8. 11). In John 14. 26 Jesus spoke of the Com-

forter, the Holy Ghost, "whom the Father will send in my name," and also spoke of the Comforter, "even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father" (John 15. 26).

The belief is general among all who accept the doctrine of the Trinity that the Spirit proceeds from the Father; that he proceeds from the Son is still denied by the Greek Church. But with the single exception of John 15. 26 every expression implying the procession of the Spirit from the Father is used likewise in reference to the Son. He is called "the Spirit of God," also "the Spirit of Christ," "the Spirit of the Father," and "the Spirit of the Son," "the Spirit of Christ" as the inspirer of the prophets (1 Pet. 1. 11). "It was from his sacred Person," says Pope, "that the Lord breathed on the apostles the Holy Ghost. Hence this supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is imparted in the symbol of a personal spiration or breathing; and the name SPIRIT may be regarded as sanctioning the faith that the Third Person proceedeth from the Father and the Son—to anticipate the language of the early Creeds and later Confessions of Christendom—though the Son in his humiliation mentions only the Father."¹

The Divinity

The Holy Ghost . . . is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been discussed in the consideration of the first Article. Whatever proves the Trinity of persons in the Godhead proves the divinity of the Holy Ghost. And if the three persons in unity are "of one substance, power, and eternity," then the third

¹ Theology, vol. i, pp. 266, 267.

person of the Trinity is of necessity "of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

The Scriptures directly testify to his Godhead. Special reference is made to him in the work of creation: "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1. 2). "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26. 13). "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33. 4). "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psa. 33. 6). The work ascribed to him in the incarnation can only belong to one in the highest sense divine. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35).

In one gospel we read, "If I with the finger of God cast out devils" (Luke 11. 20); in the parallel passage in another gospel we read, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12. 28). Thus the evangelists make God and the Spirit of God identical.

The testimony of Christ is remarkable: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (Matt. 12. 31). The only revealer of God in his true nature and character here associates the three persons of the Godhead as of equal majesty, glory, and power, taking cognizance of the words and actions of men.

The fact that while sin and blasphemy against the Father and Son may be forgiven, yet blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable, does not imply that the

Holy Ghost is superior in glory or purity to the Father and the Son. It arises from the nature of his office and work in the salvation of men. "When sin is committed," says Whedon, "against the Father or the Son, neither is ever viewed as withdrawing himself from the sinner during the day of his probation. God the Father, as Creator and Providence, still continues his mercies; and the atonement of God the Son is never probationarily withdrawn. But the Spirit does become grieved, and does become vexed and depart. God the Father is contemplated as the original background, so to speak, of Deity; God the Son is Deity manifest in the redemptive plan and dispensation; God the Holy Spirit is Deity, specially in his sanctifying personality, going forth as a Spirit of purity, making his trials to win and assimilate man to his own pure nature."¹

The true and proper divinity of the Holy Spirit is indicated by the fact that divine homage is rendered him. The apostles speak of him in direct language as God: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. 3. 16.) "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (Acts 5. 3, 4).

The Distinct Personality

In this Article the personality of the Holy Ghost is implied rather than affirmed. If the Holy Spirit is of "one substance, majesty, and glory" with the other persons of the Godhead, he must, like the Father and the Son, be a person. "A person is a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider

¹ Commentary, in loco.

itself as itself the same thinking thing in different times and places.”¹

The personality of the Holy Ghost is plainly taught in the Holy Scriptures. The promises of Christ teach it. The whole tenor of his discourse in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of Saint John’s Gospel clearly indicates this. In those chapters he designates the Holy Spirit by the personal pronouns “he” and “him” no less than fifteen times in showing the offices and work of the Holy Spirit in the new dispensation. “He shall teach you all things.” “He shall testify of me.” “He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

This has been called the Saviour’s final Trinitarian discourse. “He has left no question on this subject unsolved: before he was glorified by the Spirit he glorified the Spirit himself, by establishing the first principles of his personality, divinity, and eternal relations in the Godhead.”² Novatian says: “And because the Lord was about to depart to the heavens he gave the Paraclete out of necessity to the disciples so as not to leave them in any degree orphans, which was little desirable, and forsake them without an Advocate and some kind of protector. For this is He who strengthens their hearts and minds, who was in them the enlightener of divine things; and they, being strengthened, feared for the sake of the Lord’s name neither dungeons nor chains, nay, even trod under foot the very powers of the world.”³

The personality of the Holy Ghost is taught by the apostles. “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13. 2). They ministered to the Lord, seeking to know his will.

¹ John Locke.

² Pope, *Theology*, vol. i, p. 266.

³ *Treatise on the Trinity*, chap. xxix.

It was the Holy Ghost as the abiding and guiding power of the Church that answered and expressed his will through the agency of the prophets present. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul." They were separated or consecrated to the Holy Ghost, who had called them and assigned them their work. The Holy Ghost is the giver of special gifts to the Church. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," and he divides them to each "severally as he will" (1 Cor. 12. 4, 11). No influence or attribute, nothing short of a person, can exercise the power of will. The Holy Spirit enlightens, convinces, convicts, regenerates, sanctifies, bears witness to our adoption, and is the believer's indwelling Guide and Comforter.

There is no doctrine more comforting or inspiring to the Church of God than the divinity and personality of the Holy Ghost. When Christ was no longer present to teach, direct, and comfort his disciples they needed an "indwelling God." "It is expedient for you that I go away." He knew what was best for the on-coming millions of believers. The disciples could afford to have the God-Man absent, who in his humanity could not be omnipresent, in order to have the Holy Ghost ever abiding, ubiquitous, dwelling in the Church universal, in every Christian home and heart.

It is only in his light that we can understand the things of God. The inward illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary to the saving knowledge of God's Word, and the application of it stimulates the faith that saves the soul. May the faith of the Church all along the ages be declared in its earliest formula, "I believe in the Holy Ghost"!

ARTICLE V

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. The names of the canonical books are:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Song of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

I. THE ORIGIN

The first part of this Article, ending with the words "proved thereby," was taken from the fifth of the Forty-two Articles which appeared in 1553. After the word "thereby" the original Article read, "although it be sometime received of the faithful as godly and profitable for an order and comeliness." This clause in 1562 was omitted, and at the same time the second paragraph, manifestly taken from the Württemberg Confession, was

inserted by Archbishop Parker, who added also the third paragraph, containing the canon. As he framed the closing part of the Article it contained a reference to the "apocryphal" books, which "the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine." A complete list of the books of the Apocrypha was appended at the final revision in 1571, when the present title was prefixed. In its present form, omitting the portion concerning the Apocrypha which is retained in the English formula, the Article was adopted by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

The Article enunciated the great principle which underlay the Reformation—the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures as being the foundation and rule of faith and containing all things necessary to salvation. It was framed by the Reformers to oppose, firstly, the errors of the Church of Rome; secondly, to oppose the heresies of a faction of Anabaptists known as "anti-book Religionists," who made the Word of God subordinate to the immediate inspirations of the Holy Spirit which they fancied themselves to possess, maintaining it to be for the weak, and that "God still revealed his will to chosen persons by dreams and visions"; thirdly, to antagonize the false views held by some of the Reformers themselves, which threatened the security and stability of the New Testament canon.

The tyranny of the Roman Church over the human conscience, and its extravagant and arrogant claims as to doctrine and government, were revolting to the Reformers. It had placed tradition upon a level with Holy Scripture as a basis of Christian doctrine, and the Reformers justified their severance from the Roman com-

munion by citing the Holy Scriptures themselves as their guide and authority. The Swiss, in the Helvetic Confessions, put their Article in the first place in the formula. So also did the Westminster divines. The first of the Irish Articles of 1615, from which the latter largely quoted, reads: "The ground of our religion, and the rule of faith and all saving truth, is the Word of God contained in the Holy Scriptures. By the name of Holy Scripture we understand all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament." The Thirty-nine English Articles and the Twenty-five of Wesley follow the order of the ancient Creeds, and open with a declaration of faith in God. While this may be the logical order, the other indicates the mental pressure which compelled the early Reformers to lay down at the outset of the reform movement an Article asserting the supremacy of God's Word as the rule of faith in all things pertaining to salvation and declaring it an authority from which there can be no appeal.

The doctrine of the Roman Church against which the Reformers revolted was set forth plainly in 1546 by the Council of Trent, which was itself an endeavor to stay the rising tide of the Reformation. Its avowed object was "the extirpation of heresy, and the reëstablishment of ecclesiastical discipline." It passed two decrees concerning the canon. The first "declares that the holy council receives all the books of the Old and New Testaments as well as all the traditions of the Church respecting faith and morals, as having proceeded from the lips of Jesus Christ himself, or as having been dictated by the Holy Spirit and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continued succession; and that it looks upon both the written and unwritten Word with equal respect. . . . The second decree declares the authenticity of the Vulgate, for-

bids all private interpretation of it, and orders that no copies be printed or circulated without authority, under penalty of fine and anathema."¹

According to this decree, for the Roman Church the rule of faith is Holy Scripture (which includes the apocryphal books) and tradition, and the Church is constituted an authoritative interpreter. Dr. Milner, a Catholic prelate, asserts the Roman Catholic rule of faith is "Scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic Church." "This," says Dr. Elliott, "implies that we have a twofold rule or law, and that we have an interpreter or judge to explain it, and to decide upon it in all doubtful points. Speaking of the apostles, he says Christ 'inspired some of these doctrines and precepts, namely, the canonical gospels and epistles.' The Catholic rule is the whole Word of God, together with her living authority in explaining it, as whatever points of religion are not clear from Scripture are supplied and illustrated by tradition; and that the pastors of the Church, who possess the authority, are always willing and ready to declare what is the sense of Scripture, and what is the tradition on each contested point which they have received from the apostles."²

The Church of Rome thus determined what is Holy Scripture, and what is tradition equal to the Scripture, and what is the proper interpretation of both; she claims the power to add what she pleases and forbids any private interpretation. This is a cast iron rule which dwarfs and stultifies the intellect. Chillingworth says: "Unwritten doctrines, if proposed by her, were to be received with equal reverence to those that were written, and the sense of Scripture was not that which seemed to man's reason and understanding to be so, but that which the

¹ McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopædia*.

² On Romanism, vol. i, p. 96.

Church of Rome should declare to be so, seemed it never so unreasonable and incongruous."¹

It was mainly against the error of this assumption that the first paragraph of the Article was framed by the Reformers.

The paragraph containing the canon was wise for many reasons. The canon was an open question before the Council of Trent, and that synod the year before the framing of this Article had arbitrarily decreed the canonicity of the Apocrypha, and added largely to the number of canonical books. At the same time some of the most prominent Reformers would have taken from the list some books held by the general Church to be sacred and inspired. Luther himself would have displaced the "Antilegomena," or disputed books of the New Testament. The English Reformers had refused to abide by the Tridentine decrees, notwithstanding their anathemas, and would not receive as canonical the apocryphal books. It was necessary that these questions be set at rest, that the great movement of the Reformation might be unimpeded.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation.

The Scriptures assert their own perfection and sufficiency for salvation: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it" (Deut. 4. 2). "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psa. 19. 7, 8). "And

¹ Works, p. 105.

that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 3. 15).

These passages refer to the Old Testament Scriptures, but the New is no less explicit. Saint Luke in the prologue to his gospel implies that his written gospel was superior to the oral and unapostolic documentary gospel matter that existed in his day. For that reason it seemed good to him to write to his friend Theophilus an orderly and reliable gospel, "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1. 4). We have the testimony of Saint John: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20. 31). John's "ye" belongs to each successive generation.

The Scriptures need no traditions to amplify the complete truth they teach. In Christ's own time the Jews had enwound the written law in a mass of tradition that called forth his severe condemnation: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matt. 15. 3.) "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7. 7). He told the scribes they made "the word of God of none effect through their tradition" (Mark 7. 13). In the postapostolic age traditions were current concerning Christ which had no basis in the recorded Word. These grew in the time when the New Testament books were not in general use, and by the third century had become unreliable as a basis of either doctrine or practice. Those branches of the Church of Christ which to-day put tradition on a level with the written Word would call forth the condemnation of Christ as certainly as did the Jews.

The early Church fathers had no doubt as to the

all-sufficiency of the Scriptures, and their testimony is plain and plentiful. Irenæus wrote, "Being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and his Spirit."¹ Tertullian warns the school of Hermogenes against the "woe which impends on all who add to or take away from the written Word."² Athanasius wrote, "For the sacred and inspired Scriptures are sufficient to declare the truth."³

The Methodist Episcopal Church does not cast aside all tradition as false and worthless. It receives what is corroborated by the written Word and uses it for confirmation and comfort, but it does not give undoubted credence to it as to the written Word. "We know the Word came from God, but we have no certain knowledge that any unwritten tradition did. The former we know to be the midday light, the other may be but an *ignis fatuus* and lead us into error."⁴ The Methodist Episcopal Church accepts any light that history or tradition may bring, but maintains that as a final court of appeal the Scriptures are plain and sufficient.

So that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

The Article covers a limited area. Whatever is not plainly taught in Holy Scriptures, or provable thereby, is not to be considered necessary to salvation. The Church's teaching must be founded upon God's written Word. The traditions of the past, and the utterances of living men, uncorroborated by the written Word, must be set aside.

¹ Against Heresies, book ii, chap. xxviii.

² Against Hermogenes, chap. xxii.

³ Against the Heathen, sec. i.

⁴ Browne, Thirty-nine Articles, p. 139.

In the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

The word "canonical" was first used, in regard to the Scriptures, by Origen in the year 216. It is the adjective formed by the Greek word *κανών*, signifying a test or standard. The canonical books are those which have successfully passed a test. "The canon of Scripture, as the phrase is usually employed, may be defined as the authoritative standard of religion and morals, composed of those writings which have been given for this purpose by God to men."¹

The Old Testament Canon

By the canon of the Old Testament is meant the several books collected into one whole, which is to be regarded as of divine authority and worthy of being appealed to as authoritative and conclusive. When and by whom this collection was made is not positively known. There are some facts and traditions, however, which indicate approximately the time and the persons.

Before the time of the captivity some sacred books had been preserved. "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel" (Deut. 31. 9). The book was put in the side of the ark. At the close of the book of Joshua it is said, "And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God" (Josh. 24. 26). So also, "Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Sam. 10. 25). "Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses, . . . and said to Shaphan the scribe,

¹ Kitto, Encyclopædia.

I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord" (2 Chron. 34. 14, 15).

In relation to the identity of this book authors differ. Dr. Adam Clarke says, "It is supposed to be that part of Deuteronomy (28, 29, 30, and 31) which contains the renewing of the covenant in the plains of Moab and which contains the most terrible invectives against the corrupters of God's Word and worship."¹ Bishop Ryle of Winchester considers it to have been the "substance of the law of Deuteronomy." Keil says, "It was the temple copy of the Pentateuch, which, having been laid (Deut. 31. 25, 26) beside the ark in the holy place, and during the ungodly reigns of Manasseh and Amon—perhaps under Ahaz—when the temple itself had been profaned with idols, and the ark also (2 Chron. 35. 3) removed from its site, was somehow lost, and was found again during the repairing of the temple." Whatever it was, Moses commanded, "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee" (Deut. 31. 26). It was put among the sacred things, and in the most sacred place possessed by the people, and in the care of those who administered in holy things. The preservation of public documents in places of safety and sanctity was a practice observed by the nations of antiquity.

The Old Testament catalogue of books was a growth. Additions were made to it by priests and prophets as time went on; it covered a period of more than a thousand years, from Moses to Malachi. Each generation must have received and passed judgment upon its own contribution. No historical account of the formation of the canon has been preserved, but age after age communi-

¹ Commentary, in loco. See 2 Kings 22. 8.

cations were received as expressions of the will of God, and to Israel these were the standard of life and doctrine.

The earliest known catalogue of the books of the Old Testament is given by Melito, bishop of Sardis, in the last half of the second century, and by Origen in the first half of the third century. The latter says, "There are twenty-two books, according to the Hebrews, corresponding to the number of the letters in their alphabet."

Of all the fathers of the earlier Church Jerome was the greatest Hebrew scholar, and the best versed in the literature of the Jews. He was the translator of the Hebrew scriptures into Latin; his testimony as to the canon of the Old Testament is, therefore, very valuable. He furnishes a catalogue of books of the Old Testament as arranged in the Hebrew Bible. He concludes: "Thus the books of the ancient law are twenty-two: five of Moses, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa; although some often insert Ruth and the Lamentations in the Hagiographa, . . . and thus the books of the ancient law would be twenty-four." In this catalogue are all the books we have in our present canon of the Old Testament, and no others; Nehemiah is included in Ezra, and the Lamentations are included in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Jerome remarks on this catalogue, "Whatever is outside of these must be placed among the Apocrypha."¹

The Old Testament canon is arranged in three groups: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The following is the arrangement in Hebrew Bibles:

- I. The Law, which is equivalent to our Pentateuch.
- II. The Prophets, which are divided into two sections:
 - (a) The former prophets: four narrative books—Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.

¹ See this whole subject discussed and the original given in Dr. H. M. Harman's *Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scriptures*.

- (b) The latter prophets : four prophetical books—three “great prophets,” Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the “minor prophets,” the twelve latter being united in a single book.

III. The Writings, which are divided into three sections :

- (a) The poetical books : Psalms, Proverbs, Job.
- (b) The five rolls : Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther.
- (c) The remaining books : Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

The principle upon which the division was made is not agreed upon. It seems probable that the first division, the Pentateuch, was named the Law because it contained the national laws and regulations ; that the second was named the Prophets because it contains, with two exceptions, all of the prophetical books ; that the third division, the Writings, was originally styled “the other writings” as distinguished from both the Law and the Prophets, the title in process of time becoming abbreviated.

At what time this tripartite division was made is also uncertain. The first direct mention of it is found in the Greek prologue to the book of Ecclesiasticus, written one hundred and thirty-two years before Christ. The author of that prologue says : “My grandfather Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the law, and the prophets, and other books of our fathers.” This quotation shows that the tripartite division of the Old Testament was known and studied by the grandfather of Jesus the Son of Sirach, which must have been at the commencement of the third century before Christ, and that in his time the books had been translated into Greek ; for he says, “The law itself, and the prophets, and the rest of the books have no small difference, when they are spoken in their own language.” Of this a recent writer

says, "Now, though it is not absolutely certain from this prologue that the canon of the Old Testament was complete at the time referred to, yet I think the most natural inference from the language used clearly leads us to suppose it was; and if so, we have evidence to the existence of the Old Testament as a whole at least three hundred years before Christ."¹ This carries it back to the time of the Great Synagogue, which is placed at 404-300 B. C.

Modern scholars have seen significant things in this division. They have pointed out that it corresponds to the course of development to be traced in the history of the Old Testament theology, in (1) the nucleus of Mosaic revelation, (2) the objective expansion of it through the prophets, (3) its subjective expansion through the poetry and "Wisdom" of the Hagiographa; that "it reflects in a special manner the attitude of religious thought in Israel toward the Almighty, toward the Theocracy, and toward Revelation, respectively."²

Bishop Ryle says these views, as a rule, are put forward on the assumption that the formation of the canon was undertaken by one man, or by a single generation, endowed with special supernatural gifts for the work. He condemns this assumption and argues that the triple grouping of the books in the canon illustrates the history of the literary process at successive epochs.

It is certain that the law and portions of the prophets and of the Hagiographa were coexistent. The law does not belong to one age, the prophets to another, and the Hagiographa to a third, so that each group in its entirety can be assigned to a definite period of time. The tripartite division might have been made as early as the time of Ezra or the Great Synagogue, though no mention

¹ Leathes, *The Structure of the Old Testament*, p. 20.

² See Ryle on Canon of Old Testament, p. 222.

of it can be found prior to that made by the Son of Sirach.

Before and during the exile some prophets had committed their prophecies to writing. They spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and their words were kept. Isaiah said, "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these (prophecies) shall fail" (Isa. 34. 16). Here is a book of the Lord, to be read as such for the guidance of his people. "Only a work in which Jehovah had space to give an all-sided revelation of his nature and will," Lange well says, "deserved this name, Jehovah's book. And only a prophet that was conscious of having been God's faithful instrument in all he had said and written could set such a title to his book."

After the return from exile it seemed necessary that those in authority should gather up such books as bore the stamp of inspiration and place them in order. In relation to this there is a Jewish tradition which to some extent has molded the opinion of writers upon this subject. The tradition is that the work of selection was performed by the Great Synagogue, an assembly consisting of one hundred and twenty men whose purpose was to reform and to restore the temple worship, and that Ezra, Nehemiah, and the men of the Great Synagogue completed the canon of Old Testament Scriptures. Some modern critics have set this tradition aside as unworthy of credence.

All that the tradition implies may not be true, but that there is much probability and a large substratum of truth in it cannot be well denied. Dr. M. S. Terry says: "With the knowledge of the condition and circumstances of the Jews at Jerusalem which the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah furnish, we can scarcely conceive that such farsighted men as these great leaders and their coadjutors—

priests, Levites, and scribes (Neh. 13. 13), men of knowledge and discernment (Neh. 10. 28)—would have failed to do substantially all those things which the unanimous voice of tradition ascribes to the men of the Great Synagogue. They reformed abuses, provided for the temple service and for the public reading and exposition of the law, and these measures imply a collection of the canonical Scriptures as the authoritative basis of the entire procedure.”¹

The condition of the people called for such a collection of their sacred books for comfort and instruction, and an authoritative declaration in regard to them, as a safeguard against error. They were commencing a new national life, had renewed their religious vows; their sufferings had driven them back to the God whom their fathers had forsaken. They made an oath to walk in God’s law, and to do the commandments of the Lord, and his judgments and his statutes. They would not intermarry with the heathen, they would keep the Sabbath and support the house of God (Neh. 10).

Bishop Ryle thinks Ezra had but little to do with the formation of the canon, but admits that “with the history of its acceptance, however, his direct connection is proved by unequivocal testimony,” and also that “the law acknowledged by the people as sacred and accepted as binding was substantially the same as our Pentateuch.”² These admissions are in regard to the first of the tripartite divisions.

It must be a fact that other portions of Scripture were regarded as the Word of God, and of binding authority, before the days of Ezra, though they had not been officially recognized or declared. “The Prophets,” the second division, or as much of it as had then been delivered,

¹ Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 605.

² Canon of the Old Testament, pp. 79, 83.

occupied no inferior place, and was full of comfort and encouragement to purity of worship and of hope for return to Jerusalem. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah the foundations of a new nation were being laid, and a corrupt and well-nigh dead Church was being reformed and revived. "The Law," as being the fundamental law of the nation and the law and liturgy of the Church, must have been in greater prominence, but that would not exclude the Prophets and the Writings from recognition as the Word of God. Each had its own place, and all were the messages of God to Israel. The book of the Lord, to which Isaiah directed the people, must have had a place among them. "The songs of Zion," which their oppressors required them to sing, were "the Lord's songs." The prophecies of Ezekiel, given when he was "among the captives by the river of Chebar," were they not written down? Ezra the scribe, we are told, "went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses." He was "a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel" (Ezra 7. 6, 11). It is not an unreasonable supposition that this "ready scribe," this gatherer of sacred books, should have collected and carried to Jerusalem other sacred books besides those composing the Pentateuch. In successive years other companies came back from captivity and might have added to the number of the sacred books.

If the Great Synagogue held its sessions for more than a hundred years is it unreasonable to suppose that the second and third divisions of the canon might have been completed by that body? Nehemiah was later than Ezra and carried forward the work which Ezra began. The last of the prophets was contemporary with Nehemiah, so that all the prophecies came within the scope of his inves-

tigations. This corroborative testimony is given in 2 Macc. 2. 13, namely, "The same things also were reported in the writings and commentaries of Neemias; and how he, founding a library, gathered together the acts of the kings, and the prophets, and of David, and the epistles of the kings concerning the holy gifts."

That the first Hebrew canon of Scripture consisted of the Pentateuch, and of the Pentateuch only, is nowhere directly affirmed, and cannot be proven. The Prophets and some of the Writings might have been included without disturbing the tripartite division.

The period assigned as that of the Great Synagogue, 404-300 B. C., affords sufficient time for the testing of the Prophets and the Writings and the recognition of their canonicity. Such an assembly, presided over by Ezra, Nehemiah, and other wise if not inspired men, in succession, would be competent to decide such questions, and their decisions would be universally respected; history or tradition speaks of no other competent body.

It is admitted that the work of Ezra and Nehemiah was rightly and closely concerned with the preservation of the Scriptures. They must have preserved those that came down from past generations as well as those furnished by contemporary prophets. In bringing together and preserving them they had a special purpose, and that purpose was a religious one. They went from Persia to Jerusalem to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel," and to establish his worship "as it is written in the law of Moses" (Ezra 3. 2). Connected with this temple and worship were the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

If Ezra possessed a large mass of Hebrew literature it is most probable that some was worthy and some unworthy of preservation. He was "a scribe of the words

of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel." Who, then, of his generation or any subsequent generation would be better qualified to select and pass judgment upon the books worthy of a place in the sacred canon? He was one of the inspired servants of God; if inspired to write and teach, so also to select. So far as human judgment can estimate, Ezra and Nehemiah were the best fitted instruments to accomplish the work, and after them the wise men of the Great Synagogue.

The circumstances attendant upon the formation of the Old Testament canon and the formation of the New differ widely. The Old belongs to an earlier time and to a different community, and covers a much longer period of time, but an analogy between them may be justly drawn. The beginnings of both are obscure. Both grew under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, both were connected with other religious literature by a series of books which claimed a partial and questionable authority. The Old was completed at the end of the prophetic age. The last inspired man furnished the last book worthy of a place in the canon of the Old Testament. The books of the New Testament were furnished by apostles or apostolic men within the apostolic age. In both the Old and the New some books were held in doubt by wise and good men, and years passed before a cordial acceptance was accorded them. The books of the Old were not regarded as of equal authority; so, too, the New Testament had its Antilegomena. The canonicity of some books of the Old Testament was questioned by rabbis at the Jewish Council of Jamnia as late as 118 A. D., but the books were ratified. The Council of Laodicea, in the fourth century, declared which are the canonical books of Scripture, but in the list Revelation is omitted. In neither case was the canon affected. The action of the Councils could

not add to, nor take from, the Old or the New Testament canon. The action of any such body can only be a recognition of canonicity. There is no valid reason why the voice of tradition, which ascribes the making of the canon to the men of the Great Synagogue, should be lightly discarded. Their canon was substantially that of the time of Christ and his apostles. Christ alluded to it when he said, "All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24. 44). Jewish tradition and profane history indicate the existence of an established canon in the time of our Lord. Josephus, contemporary with Christ, gives the number of its books, and says, "It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time, and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our own nation is evident from what we do; for, during so many ages as have already past, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, or take anything from them, or to make any change in them: but it becomes natural to all Jews to esteem those books to contain divine doctrine, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be, willingly to die for them."¹

The Old Testament as Josephus knew it, and as Jesus Christ knew it, must have been identical. Josephus evidently believed that the canon closed in, or but little later than, the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who was king of Persia from 465 to 425 B. C., as books written after that were not deemed of like authority because there had not been an exact succession of prophets. If we accord due weight to the testimony of Josephus we can infer

¹ Against Apion, i, 8.

that the Old Testament as a whole was known nearly four hundred years before Christ.

As to the early existence of the Old Testament canon the Septuagint version is in evidence. Professor Leathes places this about two hundred and eighty years before Christ. He says: "At all events the existence of the Septuagint in the early part of the third century before Christ is proof positive of the existence of those books of which it was a version. Thus everything points us conclusively to the existence of the Old Testament in some form or other three hundred years before Christ, and the testimony of Josephus may reasonably be accepted in proof that this form was virtually the same as it was in his time."¹

If the Septuagint version was in existence two hundred and eighty years before Christ it is certain that at that time the original Hebrew Scriptures must have acquired a celebrity that only time could give them. But for this there would not have been a translation of them in Alexandria. This is an evidence of a prior antiquity for the originals. It was natural that the Pentateuch should be translated first; but between the first and last translations of the several parts no new books could have been added to the canon for the reasons assigned by Josephus; or if any did appear they could not have gained the confidence or admiration of Jews or Greeks, nor could they have attained a celebrity that would have justified or demanded their translation. "For it must be borne in mind that, though the Septuagint contains books which are not in the Hebrew, there are no books in the Hebrew which the Septuagint does not contain."²

The names of the canonical books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges,

¹ Leathes, *Structure of the Old Testament*, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Ruth, the First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Song of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less.

This is the list of canonical books as received by the Jews. The Talmud gives the catalogue exactly corresponding with that now received. And so the canon remained up to the time of the Reformation. In the year 1546, however, the Council of Trent arbitrarily decreed the canonicity, with three exceptions, of the books of the Apocrypha—the uncanonical Hebrew writings which were translated and made a part of the Septuagint; these had spread widely with that version, and in the course of time acquired an importance and value in the popular mind wholly beyond their history or character.

The word "Apocrypha" was applied in the early ages of the Church to those books of a religious nature which, though similar in character to them, were not considered as possessing the divine inspiration of the Scriptures or as being equal to them. Such books were publicly read in the churches and looked to for edification and as guides to conduct. Through the Septuagint a number of these had come to be recognized by the Hellenistic Jews as canonical, but they were never in the Hebrew canon, nor were they acknowledged by the Jews of Palestine. There is evidence to show that the apostles were familiar with some of them, but the entire New Testament does not contain a single direct or authoritative quotation from one of them, while, with the exception of six, the books in the Hebrew canon are cited or quoted in it. While some

of the early Church fathers lost, in common practice, the sense of the difference between the books of the Hebrew canon and those of the Apocrypha, and attached to the latter a semi-sacred, if not a wholly sacred, character,¹ yet others continually warned the Church against the apocryphal writings. Jerome did not hesitate to condemn those which had been translated in the Septuagint. Offering advice as to the education of the daughter of a friend, he writes: "All apocryphal books should be avoided; but if she ever wishes to read them, not to establish the truth of doctrines, but with a reverential feeling for the truths they signify, she should be told that they are not the works of the authors by whose names they are distinguished, that they contain much that is faulty, and that it is a task requiring great prudence to find gold in the midst of clay."²

In the history of the Church down to the Reformation there was no justification for the arbitrary action of the Council of Trent in decreeing the Apocrypha a part of the canon of Scripture. The apocryphal books which this Council declared canonical, and of equal authority with the Scriptures, are as follows: The Book of Tobias, the Book of Judith, the rest of the Book of Esther (chapters not found in the Hebrew or the Chaldee), the Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, the Song of the Three Children, the Story of Susanna, of Bel and the Dragon, the First Book of Maccabees, the Second Book of Maccabees.

The English Reformers in their Article accepted these books "to be read for example of life and instruction of manners, but not to be applied to establish any doctrine." They added also to the list three which the Council of

¹ Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Athanasius cite books of the Apocrypha as "Scripture" and "prophecy."

² Epistle to Laeta.

Trent had not included in its decree: The Third Book of Esdras,¹ the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Prayer of Manasses.

Wesley, when he framed his Articles, omitted all mention of the apocryphal writings.

The New Testament Canon

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

The writings that constitute the New Testament number twenty-seven books, written at different times by different authors within a relatively brief period after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

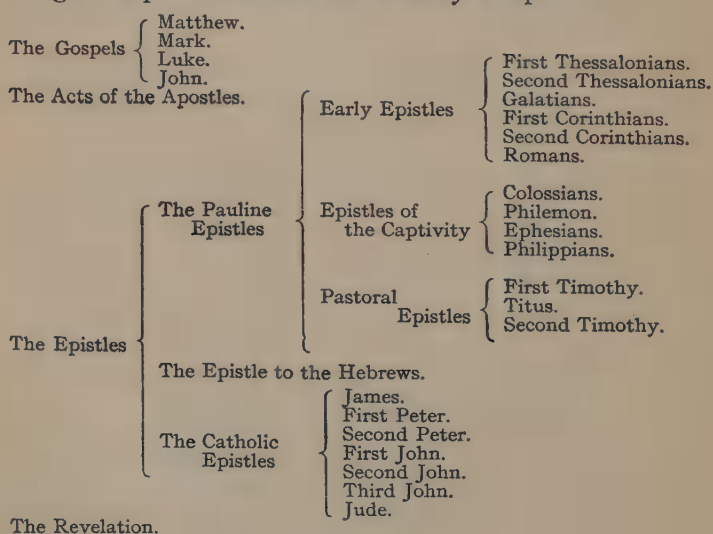
The apostles and early Christians inherited from Judaism the Old Testament Scriptures. With these as the basis of their preaching, the apostles "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ" (Acts 18. 28). In many ways and for varied purposes they quoted from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. There was a brief period when they had no book that was distinctively Christian. Their inspiration, the center around which their affections clustered, was the person of Christ. Some of them had seen him and heard him. Perhaps the one hundred and twenty of the Pentecostal room, and many others, with Saint John could say, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life" (1 John 1. 1). Next to contact

¹The canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Vulgate were styled the First and Second Books of Esdras, and the apocryphal books which followed came thus to be known as the Third and Fourth Books of Esdras. Again, by an ancient practice among the Jews, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were combined in one, and thus the first apocryphal book came by some to be known as the Second Book of Ezra. In many modern editions of the Septuagint the first apocryphal Book of Ezra is called the First Book of Ezra, since it contains history anterior to that of the canonical Ezra and the latter is called the Second Book of Ezra. The sixth of the English Thirty-nine Articles, as has been noted, follows the Vulgate, styling the Book of Nehemiah the Second and the two apocryphal books the Third and Fourth Books of Esdras.

with the person of Christ would be contact with his apostles, men who had seen him, sat at his feet, and received the Word of life.

The interval between Christ as a living teacher and the records of his life and doctrine was brief, and that interval was full of verbal testimony. The doctrines of Christ were promulgated at once: justification by faith, the forgiveness of sins in his name and by his merit, and the resurrection of the dead (Acts 4. 2). There were writings that gave some account of Jesus before the gospels or epistles, and though not the writing of the apostles they contained truth and served a good purpose. Saint Luke alludes to them in the prologue to his gospel. Those writings needed an evangelist who possessed a selective inspiration to set in order the things delivered by eye-witnesses.

After these came these books of the New Testament, which have been judged by a rule or standard and assigned a place in the canon of Holy Scripture:



These are the books of the New Testament which the Church receives and accounts canonical. What is the standard by which they have been judged?

The primitive Church deemed the canonicity of any writing to be determined by the fact that it was written either by an apostle of Christ or by his dictation. Christ had promised the apostles special guidance in this matter, and the fact that they themselves wrote was regarded as proof that what they had written was inspired by the Holy Spirit. "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14. 25, 26). "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16. 12, 13).

This is a promise of divine quickening of memory in regard to what Jesus had said while upon earth and of new revelations in regard to the kingdom of God. In the prosecution of their work the apostles claimed to have received the fulfillment of the promises, and to speak under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and they anathematized any who should preach another gospel: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. . . . As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1. 9-12). "For this cause also thank we God without

ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (1 Thess. 2. 13).

It was the policy of Saint Paul to found churches in the great centers of population and commerce, that from these the gospel might be spread in all directions. To these new-founded churches his epistles were addressed, but designed also for other churches contiguous to them: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Col. 4. 16).

The Epistle to the Galatians was addressed to "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1. 2); not to one church, but to all the churches in the province. In this way the important churches came early to possess the authenticated books. Each church had a canon of sacred books of its own, which was gradually enlarged by mutual exchange and a more intimate knowledge of Church literature in distant countries.

The gospel had spread over a wide area, and churches had been founded in Asia, Africa, and Europe before the end of the apostolic age. In that age the Church of Christ was united; part was not arrayed against part. One spirit animated the whole. An indication of wide fraternity is given in the salutations in Paul's epistles.

For the first three centuries the Christians were subjected to severe persecutions, and often had to worship in secret places, and could not have a general assembly for the comparison of views or for the establishment of a general canon. It is likely they did not feel the need of such a canon for some time after the death of the apostles. But as Christianity spread into different countries and among people of different tongues it became

necessary that some knowledge should be obtained of the books that were read in the congregations.

The general canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, was a growth; it was not made up suddenly as soon as the latest New Testament writer died. Each book, even the most venerable, had to acquire its standing by years of use; not by the decision of men, but little by little, by God the Controller of minds and ages.

The first authority by which books were admitted was that of the individuals or the local churches to which they were addressed, who knew them to be genuine writings of the apostles and evangelists. At that time the Christians were few in number and widely scattered, with limited facilities for communication. The word "church" was applied to a company of believers great or small. Paul addressed one epistle to Philemon "and to the church in thy house." Tertullian thought "three were sufficient to make a church," and a bishop's diocese was no larger than a modern parish. "The bishop had but one altar or communion table in his whole diocese, at which his whole flock received the sacrament from him."¹ To such churches, some large, some small, Paul's epistles were addressed. They were in their care, and a few were in the hands of individuals. Each church knew the history of the Scriptures it possessed. The canon was not determined by any council or collective body. A book was not decreed canonical in any formal way; it was admitted by the tacit consent, first of individual churches, then of all the churches having knowledge of it. Judgment was rendered upon the evidence of history and contents. When the testimony was unanimous, or generally concurred in, the book was deemed canonical; if otherwise, it was rejected.

¹ Lord King, *Primitive Church*, p. 16.

The churches to which the books had found their way were independent, and would give undoubted testimony to the copies sent by them to other churches. A book appearing of a later date or without name, no matter what its quality, was rejected or held in doubt. It was the aggregate of the accepted books which constituted the New Testament canon, as found and recorded by later Church Councils. There were some disputed books which gradually won their way to general acceptance, and it is believed that the final judgment in each case was correct, and that their genuineness can be satisfactorily established both from external and internal evidence. "Indeed, the early Christians had such means of knowing the truth, and exercised so much care and judgment in settling the canon of the New Testament, that no writing which was pronounced by them genuine has been found to be spurious, nor any genuine which they rejected."¹ Bishop Horne says, "We receive the books of the New Testament as the genuine works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, and Jude, for the same reason that we receive the writings of Xenophon, of Cæsar, and Tacitus; namely, because we have the uninterrupted testimony of ages to their genuineness, and we have no reason to suspect imposition."²

Individual writers from the apostles down quoted from the books of the New Testament long before any general catalogue of them had been made. Peter quoted Paul: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things" (2 Pet. 3. 15, 16). Polycarp (A. D. 80-166), a contemporary of the apostle John, cites many passages from Matthew, Luke, Paul, Peter, and John. Irenæus mentions

¹ Tomline, vol. i, p. 235.

² Introduction, vol. i, p. 71.

by name the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and says: "It is not possible that the gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. . . . He who was manifested to men has given us the gospels under four aspects, but bound together by one Spirit."¹

It is evident from these (and citations from the fathers could be multiplied) that early in the second century the apostolic writings were well known. The rise of heresy in that century, and the use of alleged apostolic writings by the heretics to prove their doctrines, were the means of directing attention to the genuine writings of the apostles. These had always been read by the churches to which they were addressed, but there was no universally received collection of them. The churches, in a common interest against heretics, communicated to each other the genuine writings, and thus the canon began to be formed, in the first half of the second century.² The Muratorian Fragment, written prior to the year 190, contains a catalogue of the New Testament books, omitting only six of the twenty-seven, and these omissions, in part at least, can be accounted for by its torn and fragmentary character.

In this process severe tests were applied to the writings which had long been read in the churches for the instruction and salvation of the people. Some books, which were dearly loved, the facts of whose history indicated a non-apostolic origin, could not be admitted to the canon. Such were the Shepherd of Hermas, the Epistle of Barnabas, and some others. In that age, too, many new apocryphal books appeared, most of them unworthy of use, and some of them puerile and nonsensical.

It is a significant fact that early the Church authority

¹ Against Heresies, book iii, chap. xi, sec. 8.

² See Gieseler, Ecclesiastical History, vol. i, p. 161.

did not interfere in the making of the canon. "No Council," says Salmon, "discussed this subject; no formal decisions were made. The canon seems to have shaped itself; and if, when we come further on, you are disposed to complain of this because of the vagueness of the testimony of antiquity to one or two disputed books, let us remember that this noninterference of authority is a valuable topic of evidence to the genuineness of our gospels; for it thus appears that it was owing to no adventitious authority, but by their own weight, that they crushed all rivals out of existence."¹

The importance of the fixing of the canon in its effect upon the Church of the present cannot be overestimated. Assumed revelations, grotesque and corrupting, have from time to time appeared; false doctrines have been forced upon the conscience; and evil or misguided men have usurped the place of God. The teachings of Christ and the apostles could not have been handed down to later generations without utter corruption if there had existed no written standard that was fixed and immovable.

Were the makers of the canon inspired? It is difficult to pronounce upon this. The New Testament seems to have come together as by a divine impulse from different quarters of the Church of God. Many bishops, presbyters, and other learned men, no doubt, passed judgment upon the several books. They may not have been correct in every detail and date of history. But we may surely assume that the formation of the canon was under the guidance of the same Spirit that prompted the writers of the gospels and epistles. "That touch of the Divine Spirit upon the human which all mean by inspiration is here seen, in the slow miracle of history, making a collection of books, and not simply putting it into the heart of a

¹ Introduction to New Testament, p. 144.

man to write a single book in which the truth of God should shine.”¹ No single book was designed to give a complete system of Christian truth, but the fact that altogether they do give a complete system is an evidence of one overruling mind guiding and controlling their perfect combination.

The New Testament canon is not named by any Council previous to that of Laodicea in the year 363. In the sixteenth canon of that Council it is declared the gospels are to be read as well as the other books of Scripture on Saturday. In its sixtieth it declares which are the canonical books of Scripture, but in this list it omits the Book of Revelation. Thirty-four years later, at the Council of Carthage, the complete canon of the New Testament, as commonly received at the present time, was ratified, and from that time was accepted in all the Western Churches, though some doubts existed in regard to the Epistle to the Hebrews. These two Councils, it is to be remembered, did not make the canon, or pass upon it, but merely acknowledged and recorded what had been accepted for many generations.

In the text of the Article no list of the New Testament books is given, but two statements are made which at first do not seem reconcilable: “In the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.” “All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.” What meaning is to be assigned to the clause, “of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church”? It is well known that there are books in the New Testament whose right to a place in the canon has always been doubted. To these books

¹ Moore, *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, p. 31.

the early Christian writers applied the name *Antilegomena* (contradicted or disputed). They included the Second Epistle of Peter, the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Second and Third Epistles of John, and the Revelation of John. Some writers understand the word "Church" as used in the article to mean the universal Church. These books were never doubted by the whole Church, and were always received by the larger portion of it. As soon as the Church had an opportunity to pronounce upon them, the general opinion was shown to be in favor of their canonicity. If their apostolic authorship cannot be proven, their canonicity should be allowed on the grounds of their probable apostolic origin and their divine inspiration. The books were extant in or near to the time of the apostles; they agree with the general scope of the inspired Scriptures, and, so far as human judgment can decide, are in no sense inferior to the known apostolic writings.

If the Article by the word "Church" means any ecclesiastical body or synod, it is important to inquire which Church is meant. Is it the Greek, Latin, or Anglican? If not either but all, they hopelessly disagree, and if the Churches disagree who shall decide?

The question whether the Church—using the word in its narrower sense of an ecclesiastical body—was the final authority which should decide as to a book's reception or nonreception in the canon was undiscussed prior to the Council of Trent. The fact that the primitive Church possessed the sacred books, and knew their origin and preserved them so as to make a perfect whole, does not indicate that any special power or prerogative of judgment attached to it. The Roman Church, however, at the Council of Trent, boldly arrogated to itself this

supreme authority on the question of canonicity. The Reformers who framed the Article under discussion disputed this, by their very rejection of the decrees of the Council of Trent concerning the Apocrypha. In their use of the word "Church" they cannot have meant any constituted ecclesiastical authority. Bishop Westcott, regarding this, thinks that "it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the framers of the Articles intended to leave a freedom of judgment on a point on which the greatest of the Continental Reformers, and even of Romish scholars, were divided."¹

The paragraph of the Article under consideration was not rejected or changed by Wesley. It stands as a part of the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is accepted by Methodist bodies generally, but is not understood as denying the right of private judgment as to the canonicity of any book. It has been asserted that the Church of England is at variance with this view; that it "made the claim of a book to rank with the canonical Scriptures to rest, not with the individual, but with the Church"; that the Anglican Church thus "rescued the basis of her faith from insecurity, and planted herself on Catholic ground."² To the extent to which Anglican divines hold to this view, they part company with Protestantism on this question. In the consideration of the canonicity of a book, the concurrent testimony of ancient witnesses is invaluable to weigh the facts in the case, but the question is one of opinion as well as fact. "As the question is one partly of fact and partly of opinion, the appropriate grounds of decision will be best secured by a combination of authentic testimony with the evidence supplied by the books themselves."³

¹ Dictionary of the Bible, vol. i, p. 518.

² Kidd on the Articles.

³ McClintock and Strong, article "Canon."

The canon has never been closed in the sense that competent men may not discuss the eligibility of the books to the place they hold. But the final statement of the Article shows definitely the position of the Methodist Episcopal Church: "All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical."

ARTICLE VI OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was framed by the English Reformers. Its first and second parts formed number VI of the Forty-two Articles of 1553; its third section was taken from number XIX of the same formula and appended in 1562. It was adopted by Wesley without material change.

II. THE AIM

Disrespect for the Old Testament appeared early in the Christian era. The Gnostic sects, who believed in the malignity of matter, would not allow that the supreme God was the Creator of the world. Marcion, who lived in the latter half of the second century, was the founder of a sect who taught that the law and the gospel could not be reconciled. He arrived at this conclusion because he could not find in the Old Testament the love manifested

in the gospel of Christ. Tertullian, writing against Marcion, said: "The very Old Testament of the Creator itself, it is possible, no doubt, to charge with foolishness, and weakness, and dishonor, and meanness, and contempt. The whole of the Old Testament, the heretic, to the best of my belief, holds in derision."¹ The same views were held by other sects in different centuries.

The Reformers who framed this Article had in mind heresies of their own time quite as subversive of the doctrines of the gospels as those of the earlier age. They were troubled with various teachers, aside from the Romanists, who presented doctrines repugnant to the Word of God. Some held that the prophets lived and wrote only for the people of their own nation, under the old dispensation, and not for Christians under the gospel. Servetus and his followers denied the vital connection of Judaism with Christianity, and maintained that the Old Testament saints had no hope of life beyond the present. Some insisted that the whole ceremonial and civil law of the Jews was obligatory upon Christians. The Anabaptists discarded the revelations of past dispensations, and relied upon a present illumination of the Holy Spirit which they professed continually to receive.

All of these heresies the Reformers met. The third section is aimed especially at the Antinomians, who teach that Jesus abrogated the moral law, and that it is not binding on believers in Christ.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New.

Investigation of the Old and New Testaments shows that the two are closely united. The Old Testament is

¹ Against Marcion, book v, chap. v.

not a record of a dispensation antagonistic to the New, but preparatory to it. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms the Christian Church inherited from Judaism. Together they formed the only sacred book possessed by the apostolic Church. This was the Bible of Jesus and his apostles. The New Testament is the outgrowth of the Old. The Old was the bud; the New is the flower.

Here we find a history stretching back over a prolonged period of time; not a history merely of human events or of human development, but more, a history of God's dealings with men, more particularly with one separate and distinct people. In it is discovered a divine purpose that relates to the entire human family. We of the present, having reached that period of time and that stage of the development of God's plan when we can look both ways, can see a unity of design, a continuity of achievement from age to age, and a promise of a future unspeakably glorious.

The old covenant was one of promise and blessing. Mercy was its keynote. Before a word of condemnation fell upon the transgressor a promise of help was given. The patriarchal dispensation is to us obscured by mist and shadow, through which we have glimpses of light and mercy. The first promise came as a ray of light: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3. 15). The full depth of this may not be clear to us, but it came to man when the first shadows of guilt fell upon his soul, and was a promise of victory. In every part of the divine record are earnestness of mercy, precepts of morality and obligation, with promises of full and blessed reward for the obedient. "Get thee out of thy country," said God

to Abraham, "and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing" (Gen. 12. 1. 2). This was the opening of a new epoch in the history of the race. There was a long interval of time and innumerable human events between Abraham and Jesus Christ, yet they were closely united. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8. 56). Abraham is a prominent figure in the New Testament; his movements and beliefs have influenced all after generations.

Moses had been dead more than a thousand years before Christ was born, and yet there was a close relation between them. In some respects the one foreshadowed the other. The awful and sublime scenes of Sinai so impressed the people that they feared a repetition of them, and desired some other medium of approach to God. God said to Moses, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him" (Deut. 18. 18). Moses was a mediator, so was Jesus Christ. Moses was an intercessor; as such Christ was infinitely greater. Moses wrought great miracles attesting that he was sent of God, and miracles attested the divine mission of Christ. Moses was the lawgiver of the old dispensation, Christ was the lawgiver of the new. To no others did God ever give laws that were confirmed and ratified by indubitable signs and proofs.

There is in both Testaments the same revelation of God, and the same unity of purpose for the redemption of mankind. God is the author of both. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past

unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1. 1, 2). They agree in their declarations of the attributes of God:

1. His unity: "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6. 4). "And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17. 3).

2. His eternity: "The eternal God is thy refuge" (Deut. 33. 27). "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1. 8).

3. His omnipresence: "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jer. 23. 24.) "The fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1. 23).

4. His omniscience: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him" (2 Chron. 16. 9). "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee" (John 21. 17).

5. His omnipotence: "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me" (Jer. 27. 5). "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19. 26).

6. His immutability: "For I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. 3. 6). "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1. 17).

7. His invisibility: "There shall no man see me and live" (Exod. 33. 20). "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1. 18).

8. His wisdom: "He hath established the world by his wisdom" (Jer. 10. 12). "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how un-

searchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11. 33.)

9. His goodness: "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (Psa. 33. 5). "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God" (Matt. 19. 17).

10. His holiness: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. 15. 11.) "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1. 16).

11. His justice: "All his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32. 4). "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Rev. 15. 3).

12. His mercy: "The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression" (Num. 14. 18). "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Rom. 8. 32).

13. His truth: "For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations" (Psa. 100. 5). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1. 2).

The natural and moral attributes of God are given in both Testaments in substantially the same phraseology and with the same clearness. The God of the Old Testament is the God of the New. In the gospel God is brought into closer relationship with man than in the law. In the Old Testament God spake unto the fathers by the prophets; in the New he speaks to us by his Son, and the work of human redemption is accomplished. In the one men are taught to trust in a Messiah who is to come; in the other they are taught to trust in a Saviour who

has come, finished his work, died, risen, ascended, and entered into his glory.

There is unity of doctrine in the whole Bible, a marvelous continuity and coherence of thought. In the earliest portions are seed thoughts, germs that are developed as the ages go by, whose full fruit is to become manifest in the final consummation. The fall of man and its consequences are portrayed in the Old Testament; his sinful estate, the corruption of his heart, the ungodliness of his conduct and exposure to eternal death, are vividly set forth in the New.

The need of atonement is impressively taught in both. The sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, the sin offering, the scapegoat, typically bearing away the sins of the people, all indicated that "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sin. The law required that the offering should be "without blemish." How clearly this pointed to Christ! How exactly was it fulfilled in "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," the Lamb from God's own fold, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"! (Heb. 7. 26.) Isaiah and Paul perfectly agree: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53. 5). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5. 8).

The calls of God to seek pardon and cleansing are frequent in both Testaments: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isa. 1. 18). "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way,

and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55. 6, 7). "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17).

Justification by faith is the doctrine of both Testaments. God said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, . . . and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 17. 7; 22. 18). Paul applied this to Jesus Christ and those who believe in him: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3. 8). The same promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob. In Jeremiah is a promise of a renewal of the covenant: "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts. . . . I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31. 33, 34). The operation of the Spirit upon the heart and the forgiveness of sin were to extend to the whole earth: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49. 6). This salvation is conditioned upon faith: "The just shall live by his faith" (Hab. 2. 4). "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith" (Gal. 3. 11). "That is to say, a true and

a certain faith, which doubteth not of God, nor of his promises, nor of the forgiveness of sins through Christ, that we may dwell sure and safe in this one object, Christ, and may still keep before our eyes the passion and blood of the Mediator and all his benefits.”¹

These benefits include regeneration and sanctification, the cleansing of man’s soul from sin, and the impartation of spiritual life and grace which will enable him to keep the commandments of God. These were promised and given under both dispensations: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them” (Ezek. 36. 25-27). “Here is the salvation that God promises to restored Israel; . . . the birthright of every Christian believer, the complete destruction of all sin in the soul, and the complete renewal of the heart.”²

The subjective effect of this salvation is the same in every age. David sings, “He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord” (Psa. 40. 3). Peter writes, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1. 8).

There is the same call to supreme love and service under each dispensation. “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

¹ Luther, in loco.

² Adam Clarke, in loco.

might" (Deut. 6. 4, 5). The same was enforced by Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22. 37).

Both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man.

Prophecy preëminently belongs to the Old Testament. It runs through every page, pointing onward to the age of the Messiah, which was the golden age to which the Jews ever turned with hope. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19. 10). The prophecies mention the time of his coming (Gen. 49. 10); the place and circumstances of his birth (Mic. 5. 2; Isa. 7. 14); his offices as prophet, priest, and king (Psa. 110; Zech. 6. 13); his sufferings and death (Psa. 22; Isa. 53.); his resurrection and ascension (Psa. 68. 18); his bestowment of the Spirit (Joel 2. 28), and the final and general extension of his truth (Isa. 9. 7; Psa. 2. 6). "These predictions were most of them delivered at least six hundred years before he appeared, were many of them highly improbable, and even apparently contradictory, and are all so remarkable as to imply the exercise of miraculous wisdom and power."¹

Jesus Christ "is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man." The parties alienated were the Supreme Ruler of the universe and his creature man, who owes him implicit obedience. The offended and the offender were not equals. How can the dignity and honor of one be maintained and the other be received into favor? This was the problem that caused Job to cry out, "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

¹ Angus, Handbook, p. 117.

Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both" (Job 9. 32, 33). This shows clearly the need of a Mediator whose nature and dignity are equal with God, who knows the nature, needs, temptations, and aspirations of man. This provision of a "daysman" which Job did not know is fully supplied under the gospel dispensation. God descended to man, to lift man up to himself. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

Thus in the wisdom of God the problem of the maintenance of his moral government and the salvation of man was solved. By his plan there can be but "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6). The Revised Version gives it, "the testimony to be borne in its own times"; not to the patriarchs or prophets, but to a later dispensation to which it providentially belonged.

The incarnate Son of God was well qualified to champion the cause of the human race. He was a "daysman" who could arbitrate between the parties; a mediator jealous for the honor of God, yet compassionate toward men; he could lay his hand on both. By his humanity he reached down to man, and by his divinity reached to the throne of God, and so bound God and man in an eternal union.

On the dark pages of primitive history are a few glimpses of light, truth, and purity. If the patriarchs had no written law they had communications from God in some form comprehended by themselves. They received promises and were taught in regard to morals and worship. They came to God by typical sacrifices offered

in faith. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Heb. 11. 4). This was an evidence that Abel's faith was centered in the better sacrifice to come that should expiate sin. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5. 24). "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6. 9). "Melchizedek king of Salem . . . priest of the most high God" (Gen. 14. 18)—the last representative of the primitive religion, shining alone as a bright star in the night of Canaan.

The Old Testament made men wise by teaching salvation through Christ that should come; the New, by teaching that Christ is come. Jesus was known as "the seed of the woman," as Abraham's seed, as Jacob's "Shiloh." It was he of whom Balaam spoke, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel. . . . Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion" (Num. 24. 17, 19). He was Moses's great "Prophet," David's "Son," Isaiah's "Prince of peace," Zechariah's "Branch," and Malachi's "Sun of righteousness."

Jesus referred to the prophecies as bearing witness to his person and mission: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5. 39, 40). The Old Testament bore witness to Christ and to his life-giving power. The prophecies are clear in the light of fulfilling events. The prophets did not understand their own prophecies, but made them the subject of inquiry. The salvation foretold, to be wrought out by the Messiah in his time, was to them a subject of deep concern. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who

prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1. 10, 11). His own generation did not identify him. "The world was made by him, and the world knew him not." "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1. 10, 11). They lacked spiritual insight and formed wrong conceptions of the prophecies. Meekness, poverty, suffering, and death seemed incompatible with power, glory, and an extended and enduring reign as a King. There seemed an incongruity between the carpenter of Nazareth and the Prince of peace, between his claims to royalty and the homely tenor of his life.

Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises.

The doctrine of immortality as now understood has been a development, but the thought is not to be entertained that it was not known to the patriarchs and prophets. Not only did the Hebrew people hold the idea of a future life, but all civilized nations have left in their philosophy, poetry, and institutions some traces of it. Some of the ancient philosophers argued for it independently of the Jewish Scriptures. Socrates was born five hundred years before Christ and could have borrowed nothing from the gospel, though he might have known something of the Hebrew Scriptures. His writings express the highest hopes of an immortal life. Plato sought by argument to establish the doctrine of immortality. "He distinguished what is corporeal from the soul, which he considered to be an eternal self-acting agency, and to him we owe the first formal development of the doctrine of its spirituality, and the first attempt

toward demonstrating its immortality.”¹ Cicero, who lived a hundred years before Christ, wrote eloquently of immortality: “I am well convinced, then, that my dear departed friends are so far from having ceased to live that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called life.”² It is not probable that the doctrine originated in the mind of man, born of innate desire to live, but was received from former generations, running back through an unbroken line to men who held intercourse with God. It is a significant fact that the more true the mind is to itself and to God the more intensely it clings to existence.

It has been argued by some that the Old Testament does not in any conclusive sense teach the immortality of the soul. In early Bible times there was one striking event that bears upon this, the translation of Enoch. This must have meant something other than death; it must have conveyed the idea of continued existence in another sphere. “Enoch stands as the citadel of immortality, of the victory over death, and of the ideal form of translation, in the midst of the death periods of the primitive fathers.”³ The incident is in itself a sufficient voucher that the Old Testament in its very first stages is stamped with the idea of immortality. At a later period Elijah was translated, and Elisha was an eyewitness of his master’s ascension.

The covenant of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob indicates immortality. Because this was not seen by the Sadducees of a later age we are not to conclude that the patriarchs did not see it. The darkness had accumulated and covered the truth, and Christ in his controversy with the Sadducees uncovered it. He quoted the words, “I

¹ Cleveland, *Classical Literature*, p. 189.

² On the Immortality of the Soul.

³ Lange, *Genesis*, p. 76.

am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and brought to view the whole truth in his comment, which must have been as startling as it was conclusive: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22. 32). Not *I was*, but *I am*. "He does not thus solemnly declare himself the God of things non-existent."¹

The Hebrew prophets "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They seemed to regard the world to come as of greater importance than the present life. The conduct of Moses is thus interpreted by the apostle: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11. 24-26). What was the reward? Not an inheritance in Canaan—he had no warrant from God to look for that, nor did he ever attain it; but it was what his believing ancestors looked for, a *future* state of reward and happiness. His knowledge of immortality stimulated him to heroic action for God and his chosen people.

Job is among the ancients whose testimony is worthy of notice: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19. 25-27). Dr. Tayler Lewis renders the passage thus:

I know that my Redeemer lives,
And o'er my dust, survivor shall he stand.

¹ Tayler Lewis.

My skin all gone this [remnant] they may rend,
 But from my flesh shall I Eloah see;
 Shall see him mine;
 Mine eyes shall see him—stranger now no more.¹

There are passages in the Psalms that point to the same doctrine. "But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me" (Psa. 49. 15). Isaiah and Daniel are explicit, and distinctly foreshadow what was "brought to light" in the gospel. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust" (Isa. 26. 19). "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12. 2, 3).

The great truths that pertain to the destiny of man dawned slowly upon the human mind. God did not choose to reveal clearly all the truth to the prophets; the new dispensation was the outgrowth of the old; and as prophecy drew nearer to the time of the Messiah it became more definite and clear. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant" (Psa. 25. 14).

The New Testament shows that the actions of the ancient men of God were based upon this doctrine. Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tents, but he "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed

¹ See Tayler Lewis, Lange's Commentary on Job.

that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11. 13-16).

If these passages from the Old and New Testaments do not teach the immortality of the soul we have the strange anomaly of a whole nation, with a slight exception, believing in a doctrine, of the highest importance to happiness and life, about which their own religious teachers had been silent for two thousand years!

The thought, the spirit of immortality pervades the whole Bible. It is interwoven with every fiber; it sings in its poetry and breathes in its prayers. It lies at the foundation of prophecy and promise. It is heard in its lamentations and in its triumphal songs; it mingles with all human aspirations, joys, and hopes. Immortality is the viewpoint from which alone the Old Testament can be understood or appreciated, the only medium through which its sublime truths, conveyed in song, in prayer, and in prophecy, can be interpreted. It is not taught in the Old Testament with the same fullness of statement or conclusiveness with which it is taught in the New, but it lies at the foundation; it is the substratum upon which all other truth rests. It is like the granite rocks in the constitution of the material world; it lies too deep to be seen by superficial observers, but here and there it breaks through the overlying crust.

The law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians.

This touches a matter in dispute between the apostles

which was a source of disquietude in the primitive Church. The Mosaic legislation belonged exclusively to the Jewish Church and state. Some of it pertained to the theocratic commonwealth and passed away with it. It consisted largely of ceremonies, types, and sacrifices preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. These were fulfilled by Christ and no longer had a place in the worship that was acceptable to God.

That the Mosaic system must cease Christ himself declared. The Samaritan woman at Jacob's well said: "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4. 20-23). The answer of Christ indicated that a great change would soon come. The sacrifices, the spectacular worship, with that building on Gerizim, and even the temple in Jerusalem, would be discarded and the Eternal Spirit would be found and worshiped, without elaborate ritual, wherever there was a true worshipful soul. The Aaronic priesthood must give way to the priesthood of Christ, and, "the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law" (Heb. 7. 12).

Some in the early Christian Church tried to impose Jewish laws and customs upon Gentile converts; the apostles decreed that the ceremonial law was not binding upon them. The law had its place and force under the old covenant; it served its purpose, and was ready to vanish away. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-

master" (Gal. 3. 24, 25). "For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. 7. 18, 19). "The ritual or ceremonial law, delivered by Moses to the children of Israel, containing all the injunctions and ordinances which related to the old sacrifices and service of the temple, our Lord did indeed come to destroy, to dissolve, and utterly abolish. To this bear all the apostles witness; not only Barnabas and Paul, who vehemently withstood those who taught that Christians 'ought to keep the law of Moses' (Acts 15. 5); not only Saint Peter, who termed the insisting on this, on the observance of the ritual law, a 'tempting God,' and 'putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers,' saith he, 'nor we were able to bear'; but 'all the apostles, elders, and brethren, being assembled with one accord (verse 10), declared that to command them to keep this law was to 'subvert their souls'; and that 'it seemed good to the Holy Ghost' and to them 'to lay no such burden upon them.' This 'handwriting of ordinances our Lord did blot out, take away, and nail to his cross' (verse 24)."¹ It is therefore true that "the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth."

No Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

This was formulated as a condemnation of Antinomianism. Antinomians reject the moral law as not binding upon Christians. Wesley defines their doctrine as one "which makes void the law through faith." The error made its appearance in apostolic times; against it Saint

¹ Wesley, Works, vol. i, p. 221.

James wrote his epistle. It was held by some in the fourth century, when Augustine wrote in condemnation of it. It was more fully developed by Agricola, one of Luther's coadjutors in the work of the Reformation. From that time it has in every century asserted itself and developed some advocates of its claim to a scriptural foundation.

The doctrine of Antinomianism interests Methodists especially by reason of its appearance in the eighteenth century, both in the Church of England and among dissenters, as an offshoot of high Calvinism. It is an error that early Methodism valiantly contended against. The keenest shafts of Methodism's ablest polemic were sent against it and pierced its armor. Fletcher's *Checks to Antinomianism* were among the most widely read polemical writings of that day. He regarded it as a most gigantic foe to Christianity. It is an utter perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith. It teaches "that the moral law is altogether abrogated as a rule of life; that no Christian believeth or worketh any good, but that Christ only believeth and worketh. . . . Its root lies in a false view of the atonement; its view of the imputation of Christ's righteousness implies that he performs for men the obedience which they ought to perform, and therefore that God, in justice, can demand nothing further from man."¹ A modification of this doctrine is held by some religious bodies at the present time. Wesley gives a clear expression of what the Bible teaches on this question: "But the moral law contained in the Ten Commandments and enforced by the prophets Christ did not take away. It was not the design of his coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken, which 'stands fast as the faithful witness in

¹ McClintock and Strong, article "Antinomians."

heaven.' The moral stands on an entirely different foundation from the ceremonial or ritual law, which was only designed for a temporary restraint upon a disobedient and stiff-necked people; whereas this was from the beginning of the world, being 'written not on tables of stone,' but on the hearts of all the children of men, when they came out of the hands of the Creator. And, however the letters once wrote by the finger of God are now in a great measure defaced by sin, yet can they not wholly be blotted out, while we have any consciousness of good and evil. Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other."¹

¹ Works, vol. i, pp. 221, 222.

ARTICLE VII

OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was formulated by the English Reformers in 1553. The words "original righteousness" were taken from the second of the Thirteen Articles of 1538. The other parts of the Article, including the condemnation of the Pelagians and their teachings, were taken from the second Article of the Augsburg Confession. Thus it passed into the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571, and after very material abridgment was adopted by Wesley.¹

II. THE AIM

Its principal object was to condemn and exclude Pelagianism, a system of doctrine respecting sin which was originally taught by Pelagius and Cælestius, in the first half of the fifth century. This error had been revived at the time of the Reformation by the Anabaptists, who are particularized in the Article as it was framed in 1553. The Article probably had reference also to the errors of the Schoolmen touching the absolute extirpation of sin by baptism, and to the action of the Council of Trent, which declared baptism a remedy for original sin.

¹ See p. 22.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Original sin.

The origin of evil is one of the great problems with which men have wrestled from the earliest dawn of time, and the problem has never been solved. Every human being has seen the dark shadow and felt the poisoned sting of evil. Saint Paul said, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Rom. 8. 22). Human suffering is in unison with universal suffering. All animate nature is groaning, as though sharing with man a common curse, a common lot of pain. Inanimate nature gives evidence of disorder in warring elements, in the thunderbolt driven from the cloud, the mountain hurled by the earthquake, the ocean lashed to fury by the gale, and the forest swept by the tornado. The material world is gashed and scarred with past convulsions. Yet the elements of nature give no more evidences of disorder than are visible in the social relations of man. Ten thousand evils haunt his dwellings. Tyranny and oppression rule. Through love of power the rulers of the world ride to their thrones over the bodies of tens of thousands of their fellows. War and its attendant evils sweep away whole nations. Science and human skill are taxed to the utmost to manufacture such enginery of war as the archfiend himself might have invented. In the dark places of the earth are cruelties that have never seen the light of day, enormities of evil that have never been written down in history. Man needs no argument to convince himself that there is evil in the world.

How did this evil come? In early Christian times many scholars held the dualistic theory—a view which conceived the existence of an evil principle in matter and denied the pure creation of God; others have sought to

fix the origin of sin, not on the perverted, overridden will of God, but on God himself. Some have shrunk from this while adopting a philosophy whose logical conclusion was the same. The early Reformers deemed the origin of sin to be in the abuse of freedom by Satan and man rather than in any act of the Creator. The Augsburg Confession declared, "Although God is the Creator and Preserver of universal nature, the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the devil and wicked men, which, when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God."¹

The doctrine that sin is a necessity, or inevitable, is incompatible with the revelation God has made of himself in his Holy Word: "His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" (Deut. 32. 4). "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1. 13). When God created free moral agents, then the possibility of departure from God was given. Man was placed on probation, made free to stand or fall. Two courses of conduct were open to him: he had power and freedom to choose obedience or disobedience. To have placed him beyond this point of peril would have been to destroy his liberty.

The history of man's disobedience and fall is briefly given in the only book that throws light upon this important matter. Man's creation was the result of divine deliberation and decree. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1. 26, 27). This image or likeness refers to the inward state or dis-

¹ Article XIX.

position of righteousness and true holiness. It differentiates man from all other earthly beings. He was perfect in physical form, holy in heart, and with a mind subject only to such limitations as were placed upon it by his Creator. The perfections of God were thus faintly reflected in man. "God is a spirit; man is in this respect like him. Man is the conscious subject of thoughts, emotions, and volitions; he is by creation a spiritual being. God is perfect; man according to his measure, under the limitations inseparable from the finite, was in the creation like his Maker, a perfect being—perfect in completeness and adjustment."¹ God is holy, just, wise, good, and perfect. So must have been the soul of man. Nothing impure, unjust, ignorant, or vile was in him.

It is not necessary to adopt the views of the early Church fathers, that original righteousness consisted in something added to man's nature, essentially above his perfect manhood. Adam was a perfect man, body, soul, and mind, with perfect rectitude of character; perfect in his affections and passions; the workmanship of a wise and holy God. With these moral excellences he was placed in the garden of Eden, under law, and subject to temptation. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 16, 17). This prohibitory law man transgressed; he passed beyond prohibited limits, fell by disobedience, and thus lost his first estate and passed out into a world of sorrow and woe.

This was the original sin that blighted the world, Adam's sin, but not the sin of his descendants; yet they are all involved in the moral ruin that resulted from it.

¹ Raymond, *Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 38, 39.

Standeth not in the following of Adam.

There are several hypotheses concerning the sin of Adam in its relation to the sin that is now in the world, and upon each of these is based a system of theological thought. It has been held by some that the whole human race was literally in Adam as the oak is in the acorn, and thus participated in his transgression; that the race is a unit and that God deals with it as such and not with individuals. Others have held that Adam was the representative of the race, as a king represents a nation; that Adam was the chosen type who stood for humanity, and that in his trial the whole race was tried, sinning in his sin, and falling in his fall.

The first theory affirms that Adam is the race; the second, that Adam represents the race. Methodism repudiates both of these as not being founded on the Word of God. It denies that Adam is man's representative in any sense that would make his posterity participants in his sin or inheritors of his guilt.

As the Pelagians do vainly talk.

The theory known as Pelagianism is named after its earliest, if not its most eminent, expounder. Pelagius was an English monk, and the name by which he is known is supposed to be a Grecized form of his native name, Morgan. It is said that while residing in Rome he was deeply impressed with the immorality of the professed followers of Christ, and by the fact that they excused their wickedness on the ground of the weakness and infirmities of human nature. This is said to have been the cause of his heresy; others assert that he was led into error by Rufinus of Aquileia. He assured the lax Christians of Rome that they could live pure and holy lives by their own unaided natural powers. He associated with him an Irish monk named Cælestius, "more dan-

gerous and abler than he," and both attained great reputation in Rome and were universally esteemed for their piety and virtue.

Pelagius and Cælestius considered the doctrines commonly taught "concerning the original corruption of human nature, and the necessity of divine grace to enlighten the understanding and purify the heart, as prejudicial to the progress of holiness and virtue, and tending to lull mankind in a presumptuous and fatal security. They maintained that these doctrines were as false as they were pernicious; that the sins of our first parents were imputed to them alone, and not to their posterity; that we derive no corruption from their fall, but are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came out of the forming hand of his Creator; that mankind, therefore, are capable of repentance and amendment, and of arriving to the highest degrees of piety and virtue by the use of their natural faculties and powers; that, indeed, external grace is necessary to excite their endeavors, but that they have no need of the internal succors of the Divine Spirit."¹

Dupin reduces the errors of Pelagius to three heads: "(1) That man may be well inclined without the assistance of the grace of God; and that grace is given in proportion to one's merit. (2) That man may arrive at such a state of perfection as to be no longer subject to passions or sin. (3) That there is no original sin, and that children that die without baptism are not damned."²

A Council held at Carthage (A. D. 412) condemned seven errors held by Pelagius: That Adam was created mortal; that the sin of Adam did hurt none but himself; that the law leads to the kingdom of heaven as well as

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. V, chap. v, part ii, sec. 23.

² History of the Church, Cent. V, chap. ii.

the gospel; that newborn children were in the same state Adam was in before the fall; that there were men without sin before the coming of Jesus Christ; that man might live without sin; that children enjoy eternal life although they die without baptism.¹

Semi-Pelagianism arose from an effort to fix upon a middle position between the errors of Pelagius and the opinions of Augustine. This doctrine, as it has been generally explained, is as follows: That inward preventing grace was not necessary to form in the soul the first beginnings of true repentance and amendment; that everyone was capable of producing these by the mere power of the natural faculties, as also of exercising faith in Christ and forming the purpose of a holy and sincere obedience. But they acknowledged at the same time that none could persevere or advance in that holy and virtuous course, which they had the power of beginning, without the perpetual support and the powerful assistance of divine grace.²

Pelagianism, while justly rejected by the Article, has some truth mixed with its errors. The doctrine of original sin as held by the Church it denies. "Its definition of sin, in the sense of actual transgression—that it consists in a voluntary disregard of righteous authority, a volitionated transgression of positive law—is correct. Its assertion that all responsible agents are and must be endowed with free will—with alternative causative power—is also correct; but its affirmation that this power is a natural endowment, that it belongs to, and is inseparable from, the nature of man, is, so far as the power to do

¹ This seventh proposition, condemned by the Council of Carthage, would not be condemned by the Methodist Episcopal Church. It believes that all infants, baptized and unbaptized, are saved by virtue of the unconditional benefits of the atonement of Christ, who declared them to be members of "the kingdom of God," and that, dying before actual sin, they will stand with the redeemed in heaven.

² See Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. V, chap. v, part ii, sec. 26; Dupin, *History of the Church*, Cent. V, chap. ii.

good is concerned, antisciptural and contrary to the conscious experience of universal humanity.”¹

But it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam.

Not content with a negative definition, the Article adds a positive one. The original or birth sin does not consist in voluntary transgression while in a state of purity, as was the sin of Adam in paradise; but it is the corrupt nature of every human being, inherited from a corrupt ancestry.

The theory of original sin held by the Methodist Episcopal Church is that Adam fell by the exercise of his own free will, and in falling became a sinner. The universal law of nature is that like begets like. Adam begot a son in his own image, moral as well as physical; so all of his descendants have inherited from him a nature like his own, depraved and prone to sin. The native depravity, derived by inheritance from our first parents—“the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam”—is as universal as the race.

Those who deny the immaculate conception of Christ would include him among those born in sin. The Article, however, expressly excludes him, he being supernaturally engendered.

The natural corruption of mankind in consequence of Adam's fall is painted in darkest colors by the inspired writers. “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . All flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth” (Gen. 6. 5, 12). Not words and works only, but the imagination, the thoughts of the heart, are evil. The contagion is spread through

¹ Raymond, *Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 122, 123.

every part and taints the seat of the affections and the source of actions. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17. 9). "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7. 21, 22). "Universal misery," says Wesley, "is at once a consequence and a proof of this universal corruption." Its universality attests its source in the nature of man, and the disorder that springs from it pervades every power of body and soul. Even the great principles of self-love and self-interest weigh nothing against the evil propensities of the mind where the grace of God is absent. "Understanding, judgment, and reason," writes Adam Clarke, "those so much boasted, strong, and commanding powers of the soul, which should regulate all the inferior faculties, are themselves so fallen, enfeebled, darkened, and corrupted, as to spiritual good, that they see not how to commend, and feel not how to perform. There is, therefore, no hope that the man can raise himself from the fall and replace himself in a state of moral rectitude; for the very principles by which he should rise are themselves equally fallen with all the rest."¹ Watson says: "The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity has been a point greatly debated. In the language of theologians it is considered as *mediate* or *immediate*. Our mortality of body and the corruption of our moral nature, in virtue of our derivation from him, is what is meant by the *mediate* imputation of his sin to us; by *immediate* imputation is meant that Adam's sin is accounted ours in the sight of God, by virtue of our federal relation. To support the latter notion various illustrative phrases have been used: as, that Adam and

¹ Theology, p. 95.

his posterity constitute one *moral person*, and that the whole human race was in him, its head, consenting to his act, etc. This is so little agreeable to that distinct agency which enters into the very notion of an accountable being that it cannot be maintained, and it destroys the sound distinction between original and actual sin. It asserts, indeed, the imputation of the actual commission of Adam's sin to his descendants, which is false in fact; makes us stand chargeable with the full latitude of his transgression, and all its attendant circumstances; and constitutes us, separate from all actual voluntary offense, equally guilty with him, all which are repugnant equally to our consciousness and to the equity of the case."¹

The effect of Adam's sin was to place him upon a lower plane, with a corrupt moral nature and a mortal body. His posterity inherited that nature in its physical and moral aspects, though they were not responsible for it. Having a nature prone to sin and surrounded by temptation, they were almost absolutely sure to sin and be responsible for their transgression, and so incur eternal death; therefore, there was made provision for a redemptive plan. Dr. Whedon argues: "It was out of the nature of things that they could have been guilty, that is, under 'desert of God's wrath and damnation,' for being 'born' of fallen Adam. They were *sinwardly* disposed; and so their intrinsic nature was diverse from the divine nature; intrinsically bad; but not responsibly bad until their own free appropriative choice made them responsibly bad, and subjected them to such 'desert.'"²

Though by inheritance men suffer deprivation of privilege, and depravation of nature by the fall, yet they are not to be judged therefor as actual participants in the first sin. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

¹Institutes, vol. ii, p. 53.

²Methodist Quarterly Review, 1882, p. 367.

(Gen. 18. 25.) "The compassionate equity of our gracious God does not permit him to sentence to a consciousness of eternal torments any one of his creatures for a sin of which they never were personally guilty, and of which, consequently, they can never have any consciousness."¹ Dr. Wilbur Fisk says: "Guilt is not imputed until, by a voluntary rejection of the gospel, man makes the depravity of his nature the object of his own choice. Hence, although, abstractly considered, this depravity is destructive to the possessors, yet through the grace of the gospel all are born free from condemnation."²

Of little children Bishop S. M. Merrill says: "Their Adamic nature remains intact. They are born after the flesh, and embryo carnal affections are born within them. In all we say of their gracious state, we dare not imply aught against the fact that all men are fallen in Adam; but the mitigating thought is that this fall does not bring personal guilt, and that the coetaneous relation to Christ brings a germ of spiritual life, such as can coexist in the heart with the primal bias to evil."³

Methodist theologians generally deny the doctrine of original guilt. The ninth English Article, of which the Article now under consideration is an abridgment, reads: "The flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." This was rejected by Wesley, and the fact is sufficient proof that imputed or original guilt had no place in his theology at the time he made his abridgment, whatever may have been his belief in earlier life. On this point Wesley is followed by the best authorities in Methodism.

On the point of inherited guilt some Methodist theologians have disagreed. Dr. Pope indorses part of the ninth

¹ Fletcher, Appeal, part i. ² See Whedon, Rom. 5. 18. ³ Baptism, pp. 23, 24.

English Article, "Of Original or Birth Sin," claiming that "Methodism accepts the Article of the English Church."¹ This cannot be true of Methodism in general. Wesley purposely rejected it when he abridged the Article for the use of the American Methodists, and, as has been seen in the above quotations, it is rejected by Fletcher, Watson, and the American Methodist divines. The Book of Public Prayers and Services for the use of the People called Methodists, as now used in the English Wesleyan Church, has the Article in the abridged form, and must be a standard for that body.

Whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

Though the race is not guilty of Adam's sin, it was by his sin involved in moral ruin. The effect of the sin of our first parents upon their descendants must have relation to physical nature, environment, mental ability, and moral state. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 17). The prohibition was distinctly given, and the penalty declared. Man's environment was changed. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Gen. 3. 17).

It is obvious that whatever would affect the body to such a degree would also affect the mind. Man's mental powers have deteriorated in the same ratio as those of his physical nature. The various disorders of the body and the infirmities of age bring impaired judgment, defective memory, impure imagination, and all mental vagaries.

It is certain that the corruption of his moral nature was as evident, and more disastrous, than the ailments

¹ Theology, vol. ii, p. 80.

of either body or mind. Death, the penalty of transgression, was not simply the death of the body, but also of the soul. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18. 4). Whatever may be involved in this in relation to the future life, in what eternal death may consist, need not here be inquired; but it implies the extremity of deprivation, and of general disorder to the moral nature. Man's exclusion from Eden would imply the loss of communion and fellowship with God. The withdrawal of the indwelling Spirit of God would imply a spiritual death, as exclusion from the tree of life would imply mortality.

With the divine favor were withdrawn the ministrations of the Holy Spirit, except for conviction of wrongdoing; the hallowed influences that touch a soul in perfect harmony with God were all wanting; his whole environment was changed from a source of pleasure to a source of pain. His powers were perverted, his hopes blasted, his passions made sinful and unreined, and his will roused to rebellion against God's law. With impaired mental power and a corrupt heart the powers of evil find easy access to the soul of man, and find in him a ready instrument of evil. Many are "led captive by the devil at his will."

What is the extent of the corruption man has inherited from a corrupt ancestry? The passages of Scripture bearing upon this subject are forceful, and present a dark picture. Saint Paul says, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7. 18). "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7). Man is described as "dead in trespasses and sins."

Has nothing been done for man to retrieve the ruin? Is there nothing to offset or antagonize the evil within?

What is the condition of the child? Are all mankind, previous to conversion, in a state of total depravity? The Article does not teach that; its history shows the opinion of the English Church.

When the Puritans were dominant and the Calvinistic school prevailed in the Church, in 1643, the first fifteen of the Thirty-nine Articles were revised by the Assembly of Divines, in order to make them coincide with the doctrines of Calvinism. As revised the clause of the Article now under consideration read, "whereby man is wholly deprived of original righteousness." When the Calvinists passed out of power the words "wholly deprived of" gave place to "very far gone from." This is not so sweeping a declaration and indicates that the Church of England regards natural depravity as somewhat less than *total*. Man, apart from the grace of God, is helpless and hopeless, but he never was *wholly deprived* of that grace, or he would differ nothing from a lost spirit. He is so far depraved in all his powers as to be incapable of returning to God. The phrase "very far gone from original righteousness" indicates the view held of the nature of depravity; that it is not a poisonous moral virus infused into man's nature, but, first, a deprivation, a separation from God and the loss of all the privileges which that implies, and, secondly, a consequent depravation of all his faculties and powers. The withdrawal of the Divine Spirit from free operation in the soul of man, and the entrance of the Satanic spirit, dominating the thoughts, affections, and passions of the human heart, will account for all the disorder and evil connected with human life and destiny.

By the redemptive work of Jesus Christ there has been a partial restoration. The Holy Spirit's influence and power has been procured for man by the atonement and

reconciliation made by Christ. The Holy Spirit by the grace of God implants in the nature of man that "germ of spiritual life which might coexist with the primal bias to evil." This grace of God is not an effect of baptism; it does not wait for any action of man. It is the birth-right of every human soul by virtue of the atonement of Christ, as an unconditional benefit. "The date of redemptive power and grace to each individual of the race," says Dr. Hibbard, "is coincident with the date of existence."¹ "Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God since my mother bare me" (Psa. 22. 9, 10, R. V.). "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. . . . Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" (Psa. 139. 13, 16, 17.)

The purposes of God toward man are seen in the gospel of Christ; it is commensurate with human needs. It comes with lifting power at every point where man suffered by the fall. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3. 8). The efficacy of Christ's blood is greater than the stain of sin, either original or actual; and can restore the body and the soul of man to more than their original glory and honor. The lost image is restored. Men are born again. They "put off the old man, which is corrupt," and "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4. 22, 24). This new man "is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3.

¹ Religion of Childhood, p. 109.

10). The perverted powers are set right and they move in their proper channels. Man is in harmony with God, the soul is restored to happiness, and the heart becomes again the "temple of the Holy Ghost."

When the individual is saved society must be changed. When Christ and his gospel prevail the Spirit of Christ will dwell in the hearts of men, will establish his law, drive away the ills that now torment the world, and bless it with universal peace. Jealousies and ambitions of kings and rulers shall be unknown; swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, and men shall learn war no more. The ensign of the cross shall be unfurled in all nations as the emblem of peace and brotherhood, and it shall be the standard of the world.

ARTICLE VIII

OF FREE WILL

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article has two sources. The latter portion, beginning with the word "wherefore," was originally taken from the writings of Saint Augustine, and formed number IX of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. The first part was added in 1562, transferred almost verbatim from the Württemberg Confession. The phrase "working in us" was changed in 1571 to "working with us," a slight but significant change, indicating the opinion of the English divines that man is not so utterly depraved but that he is able by grace to coöperate with God. It was adopted by Wesley without further change.

II. THE AIM

The connection of this Article with the preceding one is clear. It antagonizes the doctrines of the Pelagians and the Semi-Pelagians,¹ and also the errors of the sects which revived their doctrines at the time of the Reformation. They taught that the help of God was not necessary to form the beginning of repentance or amendment of

¹ See Article VII.

life; that all are capable also of exercising faith in Christ but cannot persevere without divine aid. The Article denies the power of man unaided to turn to God and serve him, and asserts the need of the grace of God to begin, continue, and end the work of salvation.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Will is the seat of the volitional and responsible power. Man, made in the image and likeness of God, possesses volition as one of his most distinguishing characteristics; it indicates his place in creation as "but a little lower than the angels." Upon this fact of possession rests the weight of moral obligation, for responsibility must as its basis have freedom. Choice makes man capable of virtue or vice, and subject to praise or blame. "Volition," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "is essential to the being of a soul, and to all rational and intellectual beings. This is the most essential discrimination between matter and spirit. Matter can have no choice, spirit has."¹

The title of the Article is not exact; in it free will is neither defined nor asserted, although the impairment of the will is implied. The Article, in asserting the incapacity of unaided man for good since the fall, by implication teaches the complete power of the will before man sinned.

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God.

Man possessed an untrammelled will before the fall. However much this will was warped by the fall, it is clear that he never lost the power of choice. The Scriptures teach this plainly: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24. 15). Forced service is slavery; service

¹Theology, p. 360.

whose motive power is love is the highest freedom. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5. 40). The command and the invitation presuppose the ability of man to obey and accept. If he possess not that power the complaint of the Lord Jesus is unjust, and disobedience or nonacceptance incurs no guilt. Saint Paul recognized the freedom of the human will. The large part which exhortation plays in his letters is conclusive proof of this. Not only in Paul's epistles, but in every part of the Holy Scriptures, man's ability to respond to God's claims is assumed. "O Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . and ye would not!" (Matt. 23. 37.)

It is just as clear, however, that although this power of will was left free by God it has been sadly bent toward sin. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do" (Rom. 7. 18, 19).

This contradictory state of man led some of the ancients to imagine that man had two souls, a good soul and an evil soul. In Xenophon's life of Cyrus occurs this curious sentence: "I am convinced that I have two souls; if I had but one soul, it could not at the same time pant after vice and virtue, wish and abhor the same thing." Seneca writes: "What is it that while we are going one way, drags another, and impels us thither, from whence we are longing to recede? What is it that struggles with our soul and never permits us to do anything? We vacillate between two opinions; we will nothing freely, nothing perfectly, nothing always."¹

¹ Epistle lii, quoted by Adam Clarke.

So confirmed was this leaning toward sin, in its effect upon the will, that, as the Article declares, man is incapable of disposing himself to the spiritual life of faith and prayer.

In Adam's willful transgression of a known law, sin and evil, so far as man is concerned, had its origin. His power of choice, originally perfect, was weakened and perverted. The corruption of the moral nature weakened the power of resistance to evil and made the inclination toward it strong, so that "men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light" (John 3. 19, 20). This weakness and perversion were transmitted to Adam's posterity, the will was enslaved, and man became unable, without divine grace, to initiate an effort for his own salvation.

His whole reason has become darkened and incapable of correct action. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2. 14).

His conscience and imagination are defiled. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8. 7). "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled" (Titus 1. 15).

His bodily powers, too, partake of this general demoralization. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom. 7. 5). "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin" (Rom. 6. 13).

In this corruption of his entire nature man cannot of his own strength turn unto God.

Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will.

To the necessity of God's assistance to combat the evil tendency of the will the Scriptures bear explicit testimony: "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven" (John 3. 27). "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6. 44). "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6. 45). "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15. 5). "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12. 3).

These passages go beyond the outward means of grace, and point to the grace of God, which affects man's soul and gives him power to yield to the drawings of the Holy Spirit and accept divine mercy.

It is divine grace that furnishes a remedy and supplies the needed help, and "there is a measure of free will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which 'enlightens every man that cometh into the world.'"¹ By virtue of the atonement God has given an accepted time, a day of visitation and salvation, a better covenant, and a "free gift" that has come "upon all men unto (initial) justification of life" (Rom. 5. 18). This covenant includes a fair probation and the aid of divine grace for Adam's posterity. Through the obedience and death of Christ the souls of all men receive a capacity of spiritual life, and an actual seed or spark of that life, and God makes himself felt in the involuntary impulses of our being. It affords us consolation and hope that our sinful tendencies can be

¹ Wesley, Works, vol. vi, p. 42.

overcome by our free will, so that our original nature is modified. The oppressive problem of heredity need not place on us an eternal burden; the traits that have come to us from a sinful and perverse ancestry can be resisted and overcome, and each one by the grace of God can exercise his will, control his judgment, and decide his future.

Dr. Raymond says in regard to all men: "A gracious manifestation of the Spirit so far quickens the power of free choice that they are fully competent to choose holiness and life, or, rejecting it, choose sin and death; and that, finally, they are, each one for himself, placed on probation to determine, by their own free, unconstrained choice, the momentous question of eternal destiny."¹

It is a sad feature of human life that the free will does not always choose the good, is not always exercised according to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. It is by the grace of God through Christ "preventing," or going before, enlightening the mind, prompting and assisting us, that we are able "to will and to do" works acceptable to God.

The meaning of the word "grace" in this connection is thus stated by Waterland: "Grace in general signifies favor or mercy. It signifies in particular a gift, especially a spiritual gift; . . . yet more especially, the gift of sanctification, or of such spiritual aid as may enable a man to will and to do according to what God has commanded."

And working with us, when we have that good will.

The grace of God is the source of our salvation, but that does not preclude the necessity of our working, nor does our work preclude the necessity of grace. A gracious ability to repentance, faith, and holiness was given to

¹ Theology, vol. ii, p. 172.

all men by virtue of the atonement of Christ; but on this basis of grace man must act. The initial ability is from God, the initial act is man's. The Council of Trent declared that "man's free will, attenuated and bent down as it was in its powers, was by no means extinguished."¹ That Council anathematized those who affirm that the "free will of men, when it has been aroused and called, does not coöperate with God's grace, but is passive." Grace going before and creating the initial impulse toward God and goodness is necessary to the performance of good works; so also is coöperating grace necessary to our continuance in well-doing.

The phrase "working *with* us" was substituted in 1571 for "working *in* us." The words in the Latin Article are "*cooperante dum volumus*," the conjunction "*dum*" being manifestly chosen for the express purpose of asserting a coöperation during the continuance of volition while the act of the mind is incomplete and still in a state of progression. Saint Paul unites man's work with the operation of the Holy Spirit in effecting personal salvation. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2. 12, 13). Here is taught man's freedom, and the necessity of grace in order to salvation. It is idle to tell man to work unless he is free to work or not to work; and his work would be futile without coöperating grace. "Both the willing and working, and the one as truly as the other. The volition and execution of it in action are our own; the working in us, that we may resolve and act, is God's."² In every part of the work of salvation we must have the assistance of God. "No one, indeed, out of reach of the Lord's

¹ Sess. VI, chap. i.

² Whedon, in loco

benefits, has power to procure for himself the means of salvation."¹

Is there a cure for the corruption of man's nature; a remedy for a perverted will; deliverance from the thralldom of sin? "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7. 25). The law brings no relief; it gives the knowledge and intensifies the consciousness of sin's enormity and guilt, but brings no cure. "Therefore, though man nills evil and wills good, yet he can neither conquer the one nor perform the other till he receives the grace of Christ, till he seeks and finds redemption in his blood. Here, then, the free agency of man is preserved, without which he could not be in a salvable state; and the honor of the grace of Christ is maintained, without which there can be no actual salvation."²

One can readily distinguish between necessitated action and voluntary obedience prompted by love. The one is the obedience of a slave, the other that of a child. Irenæus has beautifully expressed this thought: "The piety and obedience due to the Master of the household should be equally rendered both by servants and children; while the children possess greater confidence than the servants, inasmuch as the working of liberty is greater and more glorious than that obedience which is rendered in a state of slavery."³ Realizing the responsibility that grows out of his free moral agency, it is the Christian's privilege and duty voluntarily to surrender every faculty of body and mind to Jesus Christ, and to know by experience that whom the Son maketh free they are free indeed (John 8. 36).

The religious thought of the eighteenth century, which saw the birth and early development of Methodism, was

¹ Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, book iv, chap. xiii.

² Clarke on Rom. 7. 19.

³ *Against Heresies*, book iv, chap. xiii.

largely Calvinistic. The Calvinistic divines maintained the utter inability of man to do anything but evil, and that grace is irresistible. The Arminians, though ascribing all good works in man to the grace of God, asserted that this grace is not irresistible.

Wesley and his coworkers raised a barrier against Calvinism and controverted its claims. From that time its adherents have sought its modification, and its force has waned. Wesley and Fletcher put Arminianism into the heart of Methodist theology, and went farther from the dogmas of Calvinism than Arminius himself, who evidently held not only to the real physical and metaphysical unity of all men in Adam, but even to the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin to all men, which Wesley and Fletcher denied. Free will was the keynote of the message of salvation borne by the founders of American Methodism to the people of this Western world; and Methodism everywhere has been true to its earliest teachings of free will, free grace, and universal redemption. This was the message the world needed, one that has never been so clearly and so widely declared as at this time. Arminius failed to establish it in his own land, and his doctrines were condemned by the Council of Dort after his death. The great leader of the Arminians, Barneveldt, died upon the scaffold, really for his faith, though on a political pretense. The prevailing systems of theology are built upon the principle of the freedom of the will. Absolute, unconditional predestination is rejected by the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, by the Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church of America, by the Lutherans the world over, the Freewill Baptists, and by the largest of all evangelical bodies operating on the voluntary principle, the Methodists.¹

¹ See Dr. W. F. Warren, *Methodist Quarterly Review*, 1857, p. 360.

ARTICLE IX

OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

I. THE ORIGIN

The original of this Article, prepared by the Reformers in 1553, in the reign of King Edward, was as follows: "Justification by only faith in Jesus Christ, in that sense as it is declared in the Homily of Justification, is a most certain and wholesome doctrine for Christian men." It coincides with number IV of the Augsburg series. In its present form the Article was framed by Bishop Parker, who copied it, in 1562, in part from the Augsburg and Württemberg Confessions, and in this form it passed into the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571. The Westminster divines in their attempted revision of the Articles in 1643 inserted a clause, "His (Christ's) whole obedience and satisfaction being by God imputed unto us." This the Church of England would not accept. In adopting the Article in 1784 Wesley omitted the reference to the Homily.

II. THE AIM

The Article is directly aimed against theories of human merit which largely prevailed prior to the Reformation, and which contributed one of the disturbing elements that caused the revolt against Romanism. At that time religion of the heart was little taught or known. The

Church "set a great value on external actions, legal observances, and penitential works. The more these practices were observed, the more righteous man became; by them heaven was gained."¹

Against this Luther thundered the Pauline doctrine of "justification by faith." The statement that "a man is justified when he believes himself justified" has been called the peculiar symbol of Lutheranism. This expression occurs in words almost identical with these in Article VI and in six other parts of the Augsburg Confession. The doctrine of justification by faith was fully accepted in England, and the Article aimed at expressing this, while avoiding the Lutheran phraseology. The Article also avoids the Genevan idea that Christ's righteousness is imputed to the sinner for his justification. Running parallel with the work of the Reformers were the erroneous tenets of the Anabaptists. Archbishop Hermann thus alluded to them: "They boast themselves to be righteous and to please God, not purely and absolutely for Christ's sake, but for their own mortification of themselves, for their own good works and persecution, if they suffer any."² Probably the Article was framed with these errors in view.

III. THE EXPOSITION

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.

Justification is that act of God's free grace in which he pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous for the sake of Jesus Christ. When this takes place we are admitted into God's favor as though we had not sinned, no matter what our past life may have been. Justification

¹ D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, vol. i, p. 53.

² Archbishop Hermann, *Consultatio*.

and the forgiveness of sin relate to one and the same act of God and to one and the same privilege of believers. God forgives for Christ's sake, and our pardon is sealed in the court of heaven and is made known to us by the Holy Spirit. Its evidence is the removal of condemnation, and the presence of an abiding peace. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5. 1).

This act of God is described in varied language in the Holy Scriptures: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psa. 32. 1, 2). "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. 103. 12). "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8. 12). Here sin is "covered," "not imputed," "removed," "remembered no more." All these phrases signify that sin is pardoned. As all have sinned, and all the world of mankind is guilty before God, no one can be acquitted on the ground of innocence; therefore justification on the ground of pardon is the only hope for a sinful world. It is wonderful that man at the very beginning of his Christian career should be delivered from the burden of sin, preceded only by repentance and faith, to which he is graciously assisted by the Holy Spirit. How could he work out his salvation under the weight of a just condemnation? But God forgives, accounts us righteous, permits us to start anew with a clean record, and "crowns us at the outset, and makes the contest light."

The Roman Church and some Protestant theologians confound justification with regeneration, and teach that

to be justified is not simply to be accounted or reckoned righteous, but to be made righteous by the infusion of a sanctifying influence producing a positive and inherent conformity to the moral image of God. The Council of Trent declared justification to be "not merely the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man, through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts, whereby man from unjust becomes just, from an enemy a friend, so he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life."¹ Saint Paul makes a clear distinction between justification and the cleansing of the soul from sin, using the word for the initial blessing when God pardons the repentant sinner and accepts him, and treats him as though he had not sinned. "Being made free from sin," its guilt and condemnation removed by the act of justification which God did for us, we are no longer enslaved by it, but we serve God in the joy of perfect freedom. Having our "fruit unto holiness" which is wrought in us by the Spirit of God, the soul is regenerated, born anew, born from above. Thus regeneration differs from justification though closely related to it; the first brings us into a new relation, the second is an experience of a new moral state, which alone could yield fruit unto holiness or sanctification, which is the gradually developed result of the life of faith, and whose end is "everlasting life," as the free gift of God (Rom. 6. 22). Dr. Barrow says: "Justification respects man only as its object, and translates him into another relative state. The inherent principle of righteousness is a consequent of this act of God; connected with it, but not formally of it." To this may be added the testimony of Wesley: "What is justification? . . . It is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is sanctification, which

¹ Sess. VI.

is, indeed, in some degree the immediate fruit of justification, but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies what God 'does for us' through his Son; the other, what he 'works in us' by his Spirit. So that, although some rare instances may be found wherein the term 'justified' or 'justification' is used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also, yet, in general use, they are sufficiently distinguished from each other, both by Saint Paul and the other inspired writers."¹

This is the view the Methodist Episcopal Church has always held. We must distinguish between these two blessings, and hold that in the order of the Christian life justification precedes sanctification. It has been said that this makes the Christian life have its beginning in a fiction. To this it is replied: "There is no more unreality or fiction necessarily involved than is implied in all pardon, since the forgiveness of any wrong implies the treating of the doer of it as 'not guilty.'"² But we must ever bear in mind that, whatever distinction is made in thought or theological language between the two blessings named, they are in life and experience concomitant and inseparable. The soul that is pardoned is renewed; the pardon was effected in the mind of God, the regeneration or renewal was effected in the mind or soul of man.³

Justification is a fact of personal experience. There are some things in the plan of redemption that are general, belonging to all men alike, and some that are particular, belonging to believers only. Jesus came into the

¹ Works, vol. i, p. 47.

² Gibson on the Thirty-nine Articles, p. 396.

³ The Methodist Episcopal Church distinguishes between regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration is the term used to represent the change which is concomitant with, but differing from, justification. It is the creation of a new spiritual life in one dead in trespasses and sins; an instantaneous act, for there is no medium between life and death; and here it differs from sanctification, which is progressive. Regeneration is sanctification commenced, and it becomes entire when Saint Paul's prayer is answered in the individual soul: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 23).

world "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2. 9). "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4. 10). By the gracious interposition of God all men are brought under the remedial plan wrought out by Jesus Christ, and are placed in a salvable condition. Justification belongs to the special salvation of believers. By Jesus Christ "all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13. 39). The impenitent and unbelieving are excluded. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3. 18).

The general benefit accruing to the whole human race by the atonement of Christ is spoken of by Paul under the term "justification." "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5. 18). By Adam's offense condemnation came upon all men without actual sin; even so by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, in view of the atonement made by his death, "the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Every person comes into the world in a justified state, which is the free gift of God, and will result in eternal life unless forfeited by actual sin. When moral responsibility is reached and actual sin is committed birthright justification is lost and our moral condition is as though it had never existed. Then, following repentance, justification is obtained by faith, and is a blessing of a higher and more perfect character, not common to the human race, but experienced only by those who believe.

It is easy to trace in the Holy Scriptures the ground-

work of man's justification. It is "not for our own works or deservings." We have no merit, have absolutely nothing to commend us to God's favor. This can hardly be questioned by anyone who admits the necessity of an atonement. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3. 24-28).

"Works" here refers not merely to the requirements of the Mosaic ritual, but to every kind of work of body or mind, of penitence or piety, by which we assume to merit salvation or compensate God for any favor he bestows. The merit of good works was the prominent thought in the Western Church prior to the Reformation. The Reformers antagonized it vehemently. Justification by faith alone was Luther's battle cry. He called it the Article of a standing or falling Church. It was a truth whose strength he set above the force of armies or the protection of dukes and electors. He complained: "The essential thing is to have many works, works high and great, and of every dimension, without caring whether they are quickened by faith. Then men build their peace, not on God's good pleasure, but on their own merits; that is to say, on sand." Against this he places Jesus Christ as the meritorious cause of justification: "O man, figure Jesus Christ to yourself, and contemplate how God in him has shown thee his mercy, without any merit on thy

part going before. Draw from this image of his grace the faith and assurance that all thy sins are forgiven thee. Works cannot produce it. It flows from the blood, and wounds, and death of Christ; thence it wells forth into our hearts. Christ is the Rock whence flow milk and honey."¹

This Article is not merely a protest against the errors of a past age, but one also against those now existing. The same doctrines are now taught by the Church of Rome, though in a modified form. Works as a basis of merit will utterly fail us. When we have rendered the highest service of body and mind, prompted by the intensest affection, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17. 10). We can do nothing beyond what the moment calls for. We can earn no surplus merit to fill up the blank of the past or atone for the moral lapses of which human life is so full.

The conflict between Rome and the Reformers is one of the great facts of history that changed the civilization and destiny of millions, yet is but little thought of by the masses of to-day. Is there not now need of an awakening to the same truths? The interests involved in that controversy are permanent and the truths imperishable. There is much unrest, much inquiry and speculation in far-away, abstruse, rationalistic theories, but such terms as justification, the law, faith, works, and the like unhappily do not seem to accord with the prevalent thought and language of our day. The great facts expressed by the terms "responsibility," "sin," "holiness," "justice," "judgment," are still fundamental, and must be met in human experience and destiny.

Men must consult the Word of God; it alone can

¹ D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, vol. ii, p. 93.

answer the question, "How should man be just with God?" The answer is plain and definite: "He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26). For centuries it was concealed beneath the rubbish of human invention. Luther uncovered it, rescued the doctrine of justification by faith from the oblivion of ages, and restored it to its proper place in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the course of two centuries it was again in large degree lost to sight, eclipsed by political agitation, deism, other forms of skepticism, and almost universal immorality. Then Wesley and his coadjutors revived the doctrine, brought it again to the test of experience and life, and by its earnest proclamation awoke English Protestantism from its formality and lethargy.

Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

Faith holds a most important place in the plan of salvation. It is the sole condition upon which justification is accorded to us. It may be better understood by examination of the usage of the term in the Scriptures. It signifies truth. "This is a faithful (or true) saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1. 15). It designates the Christian religion, which is called "the faith of Christ" (Gal. 2. 16), "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). Sometimes it represents a bare intellectual assent to a truth, as when Saint James attributes faith to a monotheistic believer and to devils: "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2. 19). The mere assent of the intellect does not affect the life, it works no moral change, it does not govern conduct or bring the soul nearer to God. Saint James puts this in

contrast with a faith of a deeper nature that affects the whole man.

Faith is a natural gift or power with which God has endowed the human soul, and is brought into exercise in the common concerns of life and in ordinary intercourse with men. A Christian faith is the exercise of this natural gift under the influence of the Divine Spirit with regard to divine things, and especially with regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The true faith, thus excited, is an operation at once of the intellect, the heart, and the will. It is the means whereby the redemption of Christ is appropriated, a saving grace by which we receive him and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel. Nothing glorifies God more fully than faith in his Word, in all his promises. Unbelief was the door through which man went away from God, and faith is the door through which he must return. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11. 6). "The first, the noblest, the sublimest of all works," says Luther, "is faith in Jesus Christ. It is from this work that all other works must proceed; they are but the vassals of faith, and receive their efficiency from it alone."

It is only in a qualified sense that faith can be spoken of as a work. It is an act of man, the exercise of a natural power under the influence of the Spirit of God. It is placed in opposition to compensative works: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2. 8, 9); faith in God's power and willingness to save, a faith that impels a self-surrender of body, soul, and spirit to be governed and saved by him. God does not require work, wages, or compensa-

tion, but has made faith the nonmeritorious condition of salvation. This saving faith has its seat in the heart. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10. 10). This is the very center of our spiritual being. A faith that originates in the heart carries with it the intellect and the sensibilities. Not the strictest observance of the law nor the most exact pagan morality availeth anything toward present justification or eternal salvation, but faith alone—faith which is made active or energetic by love, and produces in us, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, inward and outward holiness. This faith is an active principle, and love is the mainspring of its activities; a life of service to God and his cause is its legitimate fruit, and eternal life, as the free gift of God, is its reward.

The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith excited no controversy in the early Christian Church, and the views of the early Christian fathers are somewhat at variance with each other. But though it was reserved for later times to investigate it more profoundly, there is evidence of correct and well-defined views in the age immediately succeeding the apostles. Clement of Rome, who is supposed to have been a friend and companion of Paul, proclaims the same doctrine. "And we, too, being called by his will in Jesus Christ, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."¹ He also recognized the necessity of good works, following as the fruit of faith: "What shall we do then, brethren? Shall we become slothful in welldoing, and cease from the prac-

¹ Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xxxii.

tices of love? God forbid that any such course should be followed by us. But rather let us hasten with all energy and readiness of mind to perform every good work."¹

So also Irenæus distinguished between the righteousness of the law, and the new obedience and freedom that flow from faith.² Polycarp, quoting Saint Peter, says, "In whom, though now ye see him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that by grace ye are saved, not of works, but by the will of God through Jesus Christ."³

No way of salvation has ever been found that could commend itself to the minds and hearts of men save in the Christian Scriptures. No other system of religion directed the inquirer to a path that can lead to that end. Justification by faith without the deeds of the law had its germ in the Old Testament, and its full demonstration is found in the New. It is impossible that guidance could have come from any source but God. He alone could determine the terms on which sinful man could be accepted and yet the moral government of God be maintained.

Justification by faith is an original theory of salvation for which no parallel can be found. It is an evidence of the infinite mercy of God, an inestimable blessing to our race. It is suited to the condition of men, is easily obtained, without works, money, learning, or social prestige. It puts all men upon a common level, the prince and the pauper, the learned and the illiterate. It humbles man and honors God. It fits our helplessness so deeply felt under the convincing power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaks through the word, "The just shall live

¹ Clement of Rome, First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xxxiii.

² Against Heresies, book iv, chap. xiv, 2.

³ Epistle to the Philippians, chap. i.

by faith." This promise gives unfailing strength when death approaches, when, notwithstanding the moral failures in life, the soul has blessed access to God, being "justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

The Article says the doctrine is "most wholesome and very full of comfort." It cannot be otherwise than wholesome; that is to say, sound and salutary, being founded upon the Word of God. That it is full of comfort is evidenced by the experience and testimony of millions of the children of God who are living in the conscious enjoyment of the comfort it brings to the human heart. No Article can be more important than this. What question can be equal to that of the jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" or what answer can compare with the reply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"? (Acts 16. 30.)

ARTICLE X OF GOOD WORKS

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article first appeared in the Württemberg Confession, from which it was taken in 1562 by Archbishop Parker and added to the number of the English Articles. It was adopted without material change by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

On the question of good works, the doctrine of the Church of Rome has always diverged from the plain statements of the Word of God. Its doctrine found its extreme expression in the canons of the Council of Trent: "We must needs believe that to the justified nothing further is wanting, but that they may be accounted to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life, and truly to have merited eternal life, to be obtained also in its due time if they shall have departed in grace."¹

Luther vehemently opposed the Roman doctrine. He went to the opposite extreme, even teaching that the best work of a justified soul is a venial sin. This is an ex-

¹ Sess. VI, chap. xvi.

travagant expression having no foundation in Scripture. His impulsive soul could hardly express in less positive language his abhorrence of the doctrine of human merit. So strenuous was he in his advocacy of the doctrine of justification by faith only, as to make it appear that "we are saved by a mere belief." For a time, at least, he depreciated good works and almost denied them a place in the economy of salvation. Some of his followers were less judicious than he, and denied the necessity of good works in order to salvation.

Calvin's teaching on the subject of predestination had the same tendency as Luther's.

As a result of these teachings Antinomianism spread, and some taught that good works are not necessary to justification either as a requisite or as fruit. This error was never eradicated, and it arose with new force when Wesley and others revived the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Wesley alluded to this widespread error when he wrote: "It is now above forty years since this grand scriptural doctrine, 'By grace ye are saved through faith,' began to be openly declared by a few clergymen of the Church of England. And not long after some who heard, but did not understand, attempted to preach the same doctrine, but miserably mangled it; wresting the Scripture, and 'making void the law through faith.' Some of these, in order to exalt the value of faith, have utterly depreciated good works. They speak of them as not only not necessary to salvation, but as greatly obstructive to it. They represent them as abundantly more dangerous than evil ones, to those who are seeking to save their souls. One cries aloud, 'More people go to hell by praying than by thieving.' Another screams out, 'Away with your works! Have done with your works, or you cannot come

to Christ!" And this unscriptural, irrational, heathenish declamation is called preaching the gospel!"¹

This Article assigns to good works their proper place, as being without merit but acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Good works.

Good works are actions conformable to the teachings of the gospel of Christ in truth and justice. They are indispensable to the Christian character and are an essential condition of our acceptance with God.

It is necessary to distinguish between what Saint Paul calls "works of the law" and "works of faith," or "good works." In his writings the phrase "works of the law" always designates the idea of perfect obedience, the doing of all that the law requires. To this he alludes when he says, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Rom. 3. 20). Perfect obedience to all the requirements of the divine law from birth to death is impossible.

Which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification.

When the intellect is informed by the Word of God, and the heart made pure by the Holy Spirit, good principles are implanted that find expression in daily life. They follow naturally that change wrought in us by the Holy Spirit: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 17, 18). The change has not come to the "all things," but is in the individual; the heart is changed and so is the course of conduct. The newness is in the consciousness

¹ Works, vol. ii, p. 338.

of a renovated life wrought by the Holy Ghost as the fruit of faith in Jesus Christ. "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 5. 5). The fountain of action being cleansed the streams are pure.

Cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments.

Good works after conversion cannot atone for sin, or ward off the penalty of God's judgments. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3. 5-7). It is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29).

The blessed or happy man, as represented in the Scriptures, is not the blameless or sinless man, but he "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered"; the man "to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4. 7, 8).

Yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ.

It is only in Christ that man is acceptable to God. Whatever is good in him is inspired by God's Spirit, and every good work is wrought by his assistance. It is through him that man has access to the Father. In us God sees the image of his Son; we walk in his footsteps and God is well pleased with us. "Now the God of peace . . . make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ" (Heb. 13. 20, 21).

One of the purposes of the Saviour in man's salvation was to make him capable of good works and to incite him

to their performance. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 14). (See Matt. 5. 16; Eph. 2. 10; Col. 1. 10; 2 Tim. 3. 17; Titus 2. 7; 3. 8.)

Being well-pleasing to God, good works will secure a glorious reward, the free gift of God. Christ in his parables taught that those who of their talents made other talents should become rulers over many things (Matt. 25. 20-23). In his portrayal of the judgment day he indicated the reward given for acts of benevolence to the poor and suffering, such as feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, assisting the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting those sick or in prison. By the opponents of early Methodism these acts were called "splendid sins," but by Christ they were accounted worthy of the highest commendation and the greatest reward. They are "sacrifices wherewith God is well pleased."

Good works, "supposing them to spring from a right principle, are the perfection of religion. They are the highest part of that spiritual building whereof Jesus Christ is the foundation. . . . Of those our Lord himself says, 'Hereby is my father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.'"¹

And spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

As the tree is known by its fruit, so discipleship is marked by good works. "So shall ye be my disciples." Saint James when disputing with those who pretended to faith, and had nothing more than a pretension, taught that no man could lay a just claim to a Christian faith who did not substantiate this faith by good works. Faith

¹ Wesley, Works, vol. ii, pp. 338, 339.

in Jesus Christ, who in his life on earth "went about doing good," prompts man to follow him in all good works, and these good works perfect the faith that prompts the action. "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" (James 2. 22.) Man is justified by faith alone, but this faith must have its correspondent course of action as its counterpart, and is thus made complete or perfect. Good works following faith do not add to its saving power, but they do attest the saving quality of the faith in the heart.

The teaching of this Article has been well paraphrased by Dr. Waterland: "Take we due care so to maintain the doctrine of faith as not to exclude the necessity of good works, and so to maintain good works as not to exclude the necessity of Christ's atonement, or the free grace of God. Take we care to perform all evangelical duties to the utmost of our power, aided by God's Spirit; and when we have so done, say that we are unprofitable servants, having no strict claim to a reward, but yet looking for one and accepting it as a favor, not challenging it as due in any right of our own; due only upon free promise, and that promise made, not in consideration of any deserts of ours, but in and through the alone merits, active and passive, of Jesus Christ our Lord."¹

¹ Summary View, p. 38.

ARTICLE XI

OF WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION

Voluntary works—besides, over, and above God's commandments—which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded of you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed by the English Reformers in 1553. In its original form the word "iniquity" was employed instead of "impiety." The latter word was substituted in the reign of Elizabeth. It remained without further change, and was copied entire by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

The purpose of the Article is the condemnation of the doctrine of the Church of Rome concerning works of supererogation. The word "supererogation" is formed from a Latin word used in the Vulgate version of the parable of the good Samaritan: "Whatsoever thou spendest more (*supererogaveris*), when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10. 35). By works of supererogation are meant voluntary works performed over and above those required by God's law. These works not required by the precepts of the gospel were presumed to constitute an excess of merit.

The doctrine of supererogation seems to have been

founded upon a false conception of the tenet of the communion of saints: that the merit of good works done by one Christian belongs to the whole body of the faithful.

It is traced back to the early Christian Church as having its origin in the special reverence with which a celibate life was regarded. Paul said that "concerning virgins" he had "no commandment of the Lord," but he gives his "judgment," and advises that they remain single. From this grew the distinction which was later made between "precepts," which all were bound to obey, and "counsels," which though advisable it was not necessary for a person to follow. It was then taught that it was possible for one to do more than was required of him by God, and special merit became attached to virginity and to a monastic life. Two kinds of life became recognized: the ordinary working business life in which men married and amassed fortunes, but were bound to keep the commandments of God; and the other an extraordinary life of devotion in which the "counsels of perfection" were carried out and monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience were taken.

According to the theology of the Church of Rome, after sin is pardoned there remains always a certain amount of temporal penalty still to be paid here or in purgatory; and the merit laid up by the specially faithful can be applied to secure the remission of the penalty lodged against the soul of the less fortunate or the less faithful. Extraordinary acts of devotion, patient suffering in times of persecution, great liberality in the bestowment of wealth for the interests of the Church, were supposed to add to an individual's merit. The excessive sufferings of the noble army of martyrs and confessors made a vast accumulation of merit, and these

added to the infinite merit of Christ formed a rich treasure which served as the basis of indulgences, a source to be drawn upon for the relief of the still ensnared members of Christ's body, the Church.

When this idea of a treasury of merit was established as a doctrine of the Church it was but an easy step to the sale of indulgences for money. This deposit of superabundant good works, it was held by the Schoolmen of the thirteenth century, "the Pope, as holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven, could unlock and dispense for the benefit of the faithful, so as to pay the debt of the temporal punishment of their sins, which they might still owe to God."¹

In the early stages of the English Reformation the doctrine of supererogation found some favor. The principle was affirmed in the book entitled *The Institution of a Christian Man*, issued in 1537: "I believe that whatsoever spiritual gift or treasure is given by God unto any part or member of this mystical body of Christ, although the same be given particularly unto this member, and not unto another, yet the fruit and merit thereof shall, by reason of that incomprehensible union and bond of charity which is between them, redound necessarily unto the profit, edifying, and increase in Christ's body of all other members particularly." The Council of Trent decreed nothing on the subject, but the Tridentine Catechism is in accord with the quotation.

At the time of the Reformation, however, the practice of the sale of indulgences had grown to such an extent as to become a dreadful scandal, and was one of the great abominations that led to the Reform movement. In this way the doctrine of supererogation was brought under the condemnation of the Reformers.

¹ Gibson on the Articles, p. 434.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Voluntary works—besides, over, and above God's commandments—which are called works of supererogation.

As the doctrine was taught by the Church, her theologians were in duty bound to give some explanation and defense of it. The task was a hard one. The Scripture foundations usually cited are the incident of the rich young ruler mentioned in Matt. 19. 16-22, and the teaching of Christ and Saint Paul on marriage and virginity. The rich young man had kept the commandments and was fit for heaven. He had kept the "precepts," and Jesus gave him words of "counsel": "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." If he had obeyed the words of "counsel" he would have performed a work of supererogation, and thereby have laid up a treasure in heaven. This is a forced exegesis to support a false theory.

Cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety.

The theory of works of supererogation is based upon a wrong conception of the nature of sin, and of man's relations to God. Sin is deadly and admits of no compromise. The virtue of one saint cannot atone for the sin of another. There is no remedy for sin but the atonement of Christ, and where that is available nothing else is needed. The work of Christ is complete. If sin is pardoned and its guilt washed away nothing remains for purgatorial fires to effect.

For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required.

The commandments of God are "exceeding broad" (Psa. 119. 96). This is especially true of his claims upon

the human soul. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10. 27). This leaves no room for works of supererogation. Who can do more than this? Do we not fall short of it? Our shortcomings call for perpetual penitence, faith, pardon, and cleansing. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7).

"They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life," says the Westminster Confession, "are so far from being able to supererogate, and do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do."¹

Man's relationship to God is such that moral obligation requires the consecration of all he has and is to his service, and that perpetually. The Great Teacher himself declared, "When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17. 10).

"The love which is the strength of entire consecration in all who believe," says Pope, "is made by the Romanist teaching a power that may more than fulfill the law. . . . Thus adding to the general meritoriousness of all good works the special merits of an obedience above law."²

Wesley declares, "There are no works of supererogation; we can never do more than our duty, seeing all we have is not our own, but God's; all we can do is due to him."³

¹ Westminster Confession, xvi. 4.

³ Works, vol. i, p. 457.

² Theology, vol. iii, p. 81.

ARTICLE XII

OF SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

I. THE ORIGIN

The resemblance this Article bears to the twelfth of the Augsburg Confession indicates the latter as its source. The same truths are emphasized and the same errors condemned in both. As formulated by the English Reformers in 1553, it bore the title, "Of Sin against the Holy Ghost." In 1562 this title was changed to "Of Sin after Baptism." In adopting it Wesley gave it the title, "Of Sin after Justification."

II. THE AIM

It is aimed against the Montanists, Novatians, Anabaptists, and others who denied the efficacy of repentance in certain cases and against those who contended that none could be guilty of sin after justification.

The Montanists arose in the second century; they denied restoration to communion and Church fellowship to those who had fallen into crime.

The Novatians, a sect of the third century, denied that such as had fallen into grievous sin, especially those who had apostatized in time of persecution, should be readmitted to the Church, though they gave evidence of sincere repentance and conversion.¹

Origen, in the third century, advanced the opinion that persons who had once embraced the gospel, been baptized and then denied the faith, could not be readmitted to repentance nor obtain pardon of sin. This view was rejected by Athanasius and others. Some Church fathers modified its severity by ruling that it must be understood according to the style of the times, by which "unpardonable signifies such to which by the discipline and custom of the Church pardon may not be administered. They are called 'unpardonable' not because God alone would not pardon them, but because God alone could."²

The Anabaptists revived these errors at the time of the Reformation. This sect is mentioned by name in the original Latin Augsburg Confession, and it annoyed and perplexed the English Reformers with its teachings. In the reign of Henry VIII a statute was enacted by which "They are excluded from the king's pardon who hold that sinners after baptism cannot be restored by repentance."

The last sentence in the Article would also apply to the Antinomians, who claim the believer cannot sin because he is "regenerate and within the covenant of grace." This error appeared in apostolic times, lingered through the centuries, and was fully developed by the writings of Agricola in the sixteenth century. It appeared again in the seventeenth century as an offshoot of high Calvinism. It was met in this form by the early Methodists. Wesley

¹ See Eusebius, *Church History*, book vi; Dupin, *History of the Church*, vol. ii, p. 47; Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. III, part ii, chap. v, sec. 17.

² Jeremy Taylor.

and Fletcher were its most powerful opponents. Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism are among the most forceful polemical writings of the age.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification.

The phrase "sin against the Holy Ghost" is not found in the Holy Scriptures. The sin condemned in the gospel is "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." All blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is unpardonable sin, but there may be other sins against the Holy Ghost which are remissible. "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12. 31, 32).

Upon this passage Wesley says: "How immense is the number in every nation, throughout the Christian world, of those who have been more or less distressed on account of this scripture! . . . How is it possible that anyone who reads his Bible can one hour remain in doubt concerning it, when our Lord himself has so clearly told us what that blasphemy is? 'He that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness; because they said, He hath an unclean spirit' (Mark 3. 29, 30). This, then, and this alone, is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: *the saying, he had an unclean spirit*; the affirming that Christ wrought his miracles by the power of

an evil spirit; or, more particularly, that 'he cast out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils.'"¹ "When the person obstinately attributed those works to the devil, which he had the fullest evidence could be wrought only by the Spirit of God: that this and nothing else is the *sin against the Holy Spirit* is evident from the connection in this place; and more particularly from Mark 3. 28-30."²

This is substantially the view held by Methodist divines as to the nature of this particular sin. The evangelist's own comment upon it should settle all controversy: "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit." The sin of the Pharisees was one of thought: "Jesus knew their thoughts" (Matt. 12. 25) and the intense hatred that inspired them, and was able to give exact measurement of their guilt. It was a sin of open speech: "They said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (Matt. 12. 24). The claim of Jesus was that he "cast out devils by the Spirit of God," and that this complete mastery of evil spirits was an indication that "the kingdom of God" had come to them; but their speech represented Christ as in league with the powers of darkness, and the miracle wrought as the work of "the prince of the devils."

There are some variations in views respecting the liability of men to the commission of this sin in later generations. Wesley says, "Never more be afraid of committing the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost! You are in no more danger of doing this than of pulling the sun out of the firmament."³ This sin cannot now be committed under the same aggravating circumstances, by eyewitnesses of the miracles of Christ, as Jesus is no longer upon the earth. But it is well that men should

¹ Works, vol. ii, p. 246.

² Adam Clarke, in loco.

³ Works, vol. ii, p. 246.

have a wholesome fear of speaking contemptuously of God, of the Father, of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost. To do so in any degree is a dangerous approach to an unpardonable sin. To ridicule or contemn religion, or sport with the work of God on the human heart, is dangerous. To cast contemptuous slanders upon the work of the Holy Ghost may be to approximate a fearful extremity of guilt.

Three things, says an eminent divine, are essential to real blasphemy: "1. God must be the object; 2. The words spoken or written, independently of consequences which others may derive from them, must be injurious in their nature; and, 3. He who commits the crime must do it knowingly."¹ And even this when not specifically aimed against the Holy Ghost is within the reach of God's forgiving mercy.

"Many sincere people," says Adam Clarke, "have been grievously troubled with apprehension that they had committed the unpardonable sin; but let it be observed that no man who believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ can ever commit this sin; therefore let no man's heart fail because of it from henceforth and forever. Amen."² The very fear is proof of freedom from this awful sin.

In his discussion of this question Whedon draws these conclusions: 1. To grieve, to vex, or to resist the Holy Spirit does not of itself amount to this blaspheming of the Holy Spirit. All these are done, and yet the sinners do repent and are saved. 2. This blasphemy of the Holy Ghost is not the same as becoming hardened against impression, or becoming hopeless by continuance in sin, or as "sinning away the day of grace." It is plainly, however long the preparation, one heinous act; so heinous

¹ McClintock and Strong, article "Blasphemy."

² Commentary, in loco.

in itself as that the Spirit becomes, therefor, the sinner's enemy. "They rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy" (Isa. 63. 10).

3. We cannot judge of this sin as committed by another; we may not know the intention of the blasphemy, or the personality against whom it is directed; the Holy Spirit himself is most pure, wise, and sovereign Judge when the blasphemy, uttered or written, shall be held as blasphemy against himself.

There are some passages of Scripture bearing upon the subject of the unpardonable sin which stood in close connection with the controversies that called forth the Article under consideration:

"For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6. 4-6, R. V.).

These apostates had experienced much of the power of divine grace, and had been numbered with the saints of God. Figure after figure is used to show that they had been truly regenerate. They had been once enlightened, had tasted the heavenly gift, had been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come. Little else could be said to indicate high attainments in the divine life. "And then fell away." There is no supposition about it, as the Authorized Version indicates. Having fallen away they were still "crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame"; and while they were doing this it was impossible to renew them again to repentance. Nothing is said of "impossibility"

in case they should give up sin and cease opposition to the gospel of Christ.

Bishop Westcott says: "The apostasy described is marked not only by a decisive act, but also by a continuous present attitude, a hostile relation to Christ himself and to belief in Christ; and thus there is no question of the abstract efficacy of the means of grace provided through the ordinances of the Church. The state of the men themselves is such as to preclude their application."¹ The means which God provided for their salvation were utterly and continuously discarded, and no other means could be found. They put themselves upon the same level with the unbelieving Jews, justifying the men who crucified our Lord, and in spirit sharing in their cruelty and guilt. The impossibility does not apply to the apostate's subjective ability to return to repentance. It is possible that those alluded to in this text had by their continued sin destroyed within themselves all susceptibility to the influences of the Holy Spirit, and thereby rendered repentance impossible, but, as Whedon justly observes, "this does not prove that all other apostates become impossible of recovery, any more than our Saviour's words (Mark 10. 25-27) prove it universally and forever impossible for a rich man to be saved."²

"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries. A man that hath set at naught Moses's law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the cove-

¹ Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 165.

² Commentary, in loco.

nant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10. 26-29, R. V.)

It is evident that the sin alluded to here is apostasy from the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ after regeneration. It is not necessarily one great sin; it may be a condition attained by slow degrees, and by continuous sin, ending in hardness of heart, a seared conscience, and an utter rejection of Christ and Christian truth—not simply truth intellectually held, but truth that had been felt. The sinner here condemned is the man who renounces and denounces the very Christ whose redeeming love he had experienced. Rejecting this Saviour, there is no other savior for him. The great sin that renders the apostate's doom final and irrevocable is this continuous rejection of Christ. There is but one atonement, and no salvation but by that one. "There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins." The inspired writer does not deny the ability of the sinner to repent, nor does he set limits to the efficacy of Christ's work for the penitent.

"Looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birth-right. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it diligently with tears" (Heb. 12. 15-17, R. V.).

"It will be observed that the difficulty of this passage is far less when rendered (as above) as it is in the Revised Version. Readers of the Authorized Version might naturally think that the writer denied that Esau found repentance, or a place of repentance. A reference to the

Greek makes it clear that what Esau sought was not a 'place of repentance' (τόπον μετανοίας), for the pronoun 'it' is feminine (αὐτήν). Grammatically it may refer either to 'repentance' (μετανοίας) or to 'the blessing' (εὐλογίαν), but there can be little room for doubt that the Revisers are right in referring it to the latter (comp. Gen. 27. 38). If this is so there is no ground for maintaining, on the strength of this passage, that a man may seek diligently to find repentance and fail to obtain it. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that when Esau 'sought the blessing diligently with tears' his probation, so far as his birthright was concerned, was already over, for the award had been made, and the blessing actually given to another. His 'repentance,' therefore, is parallel to nothing on this side of the grave."¹

Dr. Whedon says pertinently of verse 17: "The meaning here, then, is that Esau's tears and prayers afforded no chance for favor, or regaining his birthright. The divine will had fundamentally settled the Messianic line, and Isaac's inflexibility was the expositor of that will. It was not, however, a question of Esau's personal salvation, but of his place in the theocratic line. It was perfectly competent for Esau to repent of his sins and be saved; but no repentance could repurchase his sold birthright."²

All these passages indicate the liability of the truly saved to fall into sin, and are a solemn warning as to the danger of doing so, and of putting off the time of repentance until too late. The terrible doom of persistent and final apostasy should cause us to regard with dread the least departure from the strictest fidelity to God.

"If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them

¹ Gibson on the Articles, p. 451.

² Commentary, in loco.

that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5. 16, 17, R. V.).

Dr. Whedon says: "We hold that the sin unto death is the 'unpardonable sin,' the sin against the Holy Ghost of Matt. 12. 31, 32." Prayer for such a sinning man is not enjoined upon the Church by the apostle, as in the case of the brother who commits a sin "not unto death"; neither is it prohibited. "I do not say" is no absolute prohibition, but only a declining to advise prayer if the deadly nature of the sin were known. The Church may pray, but must not "charge God with unfaithfulness if the prayer fail of fulfillment and the sinning brother prove hard and obdurate." The possibility of such a sin is here reaffirmed both as a most solemn fact and as a solution of unanswered prayer. If the sinning brother continues sinning, his sin is unto death, even eternal death; but if he repents and forsakes sin forgiveness will not be denied him.¹ "This specific sin against the Spirit can have been committed by none who have grace enough to dread its commission, or who have the slightest true desire of return."²

"But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die" (Ezek. 18. 24).

Saint Paul said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have

¹ See Whedon's Commentary on 1 John 5. 16, 17; also Gibson, Thirty-nine Articles, p. 452.

² Pope, Theology, vol. ii, p. 70.

preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9. 27). The apostle understood the necessity of subduing the fleshly appetites of the body lest they should ensnare the soul and cause him to lose the crown for which he was contending. Men are not saved in this life beyond the possibility of sinning, or all exhortations to fidelity and steadfastness are an absurdity.

There are some passages of Scripture which seem to favor the idea that the regenerate soul can never finally fall from grace: "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 8). This has been interpreted to mean that there can be no failure in their firm endurance to the end. It is contended by some that the passage furnishes a guarantee against the greatest of all dangers, the fickleness of the human will. Such an interpretation, however, is opposed to the true doctrine of probation and the freedom of the will.

"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1. 6). This confidence was not because the writer believed those to whom he wrote elected to eternal life, or because of the certainty of their perseverance by virtue of that election. He exhorts them to "work out their salvation with fear and trembling" (2. 12); to "stand fast in the Lord" (4. 1), "holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain" (2. 16). Their past fidelity to God, and their affection for Paul, their spiritual father, inspired confidence that they would be faithful to the end.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. . . . Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his

seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (1 John 3. 6, 9, R. V.). "Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not" (chap. 5. 18, R. V.). The following passage may be placed in opposition to these: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1. 8, 10, R. V.). These words were doubtless applied by Saint John to the unregenerate, to the Nicolaitans or Antinomian gnostics; and were true whether they affirmed they had never committed sin, or denied that any of their evil practices were sinful in the sight of God.¹

The notes of John Wesley upon these passages are clear and definite. Verse 6: "*Whosoever abideth in communion with him—By loving faith, sinneth not, while he so abideth. Whosoever sinneth certainly seeth him not—The loving eye of his soul is not then fixed upon God; neither doth he then experimentally know him—Whatever he did in time past.*" Verse 9: "*Whosoever is born of God—By living faith, whereby God is continually breathing spiritual life into his soul, and his soul is continually breathing out love and prayer to God, doth not commit sin. For the divine seed of loving faith abideth in him; and so long as it doth, he cannot sin, because he is born of God—Is inwardly and universally changed.*"

After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives.

The word is *may*, not *must*—may rise again and amend our lives. We admit the possibility of falling from grace,

¹ "The heretics had formed a system that reconciled the antithesis between sanctity and depravity of life and conduct. They taught that a man might be an outrageous violator of law and yet a pure and holy saint. The epistle is, therefore, a defense of Christian purity from sin against Gnostic purity in sin."—Whedon, Introduction to First Epistle of John.

and, if we repent not, of perishing eternally; but if we repent we may, by the grace of God, be restored to divine favor. This is the teaching of Methodism throughout the world, as distinguished from the doctrine of inflexible virtue, or irresistible grace.¹

Backsliding is a sin very frequently mentioned in God's Word. He warned his people against it, not only Israel as a nation, but churches and individuals: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psa. 50. 22). "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3. 12, 13). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10. 12).

There are also many passages regarding recovery: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psa. 51. 12). "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake" (Psa. 23. 3). "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God" (Jer. 3. 22). "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him" (Hos. 14. 4).

The case of Peter is remarkable for his denial of Christ, for his repentance, his recovery, and his reinstatement as leader of the apostolic band.

Wesley gives striking testimony: "If it be asked, 'Do any real apostates find mercy from God? Do any

¹ The Calvinists of the Church of England made various unsuccessful attempts to change the Articles to comport with their own tenets. In the second Admonition to Parliament in 1572 they said, "And indeed the book of the Articles of Christian Religion speaketh very dangerously of falling from grace, which is to be reformed because it savoreth too much of error." In 1604 a suggestion was made that, after the statement that we "may depart from grace given," there should be added the words, "yet neither totally nor finally." (See Green on Thirty-nine Articles, p. 108.)

that have "made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience" recover what they have lost? Do you know, have you seen any instance of persons who found redemption in the blood of Jesus and afterward fell away, and yet were restored—"renewed again to repentance"? Yea, verily; and not one, or a hundred only, but, I am persuaded, several thousands. . . . It is a common thing for those who are thus sanctified to believe they cannot fall; to suppose themselves 'pillars in the temple of God, that shall go out no more.' Nevertheless we have seen some of the strongest of them, after a time, moved from their steadfastness. . . . Nay, sometimes they have utterly lost the life of God, and sin hath regained dominion over them. Yet several of these, after being thoroughly sensible of their fall, and deeply ashamed before God, have been again filled with his love, and not only perfected therein, but stablished, strengthened, and settled. They have received the blessing they had before, with abundant increase."¹

And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

This is a just conclusion from human experience, the dictates of reason, and the statements of Holy Scripture.

¹ Works, vol. ii, pp. 247, 248.

ARTICLE XIII

OF THE CHURCH

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed by the English Reformers in 1553. It was doubtless suggested by Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, in which the Church is defined in nearly the same language. It has remained practically unchanged. Wesley omitted a single paragraph from the English Article.

II. THE AIM

The English Reformers were in the midst of bitter controversies; England had severed her connection with Rome, and it was necessary that she should offer her own definition of the Church, in opposition to the claim of the Roman hierarchy that no valid Church could exist without connection with the Church of Rome.

John Wesley arranged in 1784 that the Methodist societies in North America should be organized into a distinct and independent Church. He adopted this Article as his own definition of a true and valid Church. As he used precisely the language used by the English Reformers he placed the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church upon the same plane as that upon which they had placed the Anglican Church, not arrogating to itself any superiority or disparaging the claims of any other, but

filling its own place as "a congregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered," forming part of the universal Church of Jesus Christ.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The visible Church of Christ.

The word "church" means simply an assembly or congregation, and must have some other word joined to it to determine its nature; as, the Church of God, the Church of Christ. The derivation of the word is given by Dr. Adam Clarke as follows: "In primitive times, before Christians had any stated buildings, they worshiped in private houses. . . . As these houses were dedicated to the worship of God, each was termed *kurion oikos*, the 'house of the Lord'; which word, in process of time, became contracted into *kurionk*, and *kuriake*; and hence the *kirk* of our northern neighbors, and *kirik* of our Saxon ancestors, from which, by corruption, changing the hard Saxon *c* into *ch*, we have made the word 'church.'"¹

This word has many significations. In the New Testament it denotes that one mystical body of which Christ is the head, and in the unity of which all saints, whether in heaven or on earth, are necessarily included as constituent parts. This Church is called mystical or invisible because the change wrought, and the grace which gave its individuals a claim to be members of this blessed society, were not objects of sense, and could not be judged of by men, and because many of its members are now in heaven. The word is also used in the Scriptures to designate a Christian society in some particular place, as "the church in Ephesus." It was sometimes used of a few

¹ Christian Theology, p. 249.

believers whose meeting place was some private house. So we read of Priscilla and Aquila and "the church that is in their house" (Rom. 16. 5), and of Philemon and the church in his house. The Church fathers used it of any body of believers associated together and participating with their pastors in the institution and ordinances of Jesus Christ. In this sense they speak of the church of Rome, the church of Antioch, and the church of Alexandria. They used it frequently, also, in the sense of the universal body of believers. So Irenæus speaks of "the church dispersed through the whole world to the ends of the earth." Origen calls it "the church of God under heaven," and Polycarp, when seized by his murderers, prayed for "the catholic church throughout the world."¹

The use of the word for the building in which Christians worship was not in use until the time of Origen, in the third century. The word is not used in the Scriptures in the singular number as representing all the churches in any one country, or those adhering to any one system of doctrines or form of government, as the Church of Rome or the Church of England; neither was it so used with much frequency by the early Church fathers. Lord King says: "I find the word 'church' once used by Cyprian for a collection of many particular churches, who mentions in the singular number 'the church of God in Africa and Numidia.' Else I do not remember that ever I met with it in this sense, in any writings, either of this or the rest of the fathers."²

That Jesus intended to found a church in the sense of a visible society cannot be doubted. He gave his disciples instruction and training to this end, and specially endowed the apostles as an equipment for their work. He gave them a special commission: "Go ye therefore,

¹ King, *Primitive Church*, p. 2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 19, 20). Thus, as a separate, visible body they were to teach all the doctrines of Christ, and by the sacrament of baptism admit others to fellowship with them. This fellowship was to be maintained by participating in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper with more or less frequency, to testify to their continued faith in the great distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, the redemption of the world by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22. 19).

In a strict sense the Church of Christ consists of all who are vitally united to the Saviour by a living faith. All such are in communion with him, and from him derive all spiritual life and fruitfulness. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing" (John 15. 5). This body of believers is a visible Church, but it cannot be determined as to the vital union with Christ of each individual member; this must be left to Him who alone seeth the heart. This visible Church upon earth is the royal dwelling place of Christ, "an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22). It is spoken of as "the body of Christ," as "one body," of which Christ is the head.

In a larger sense the visible Church of Christ consists of all who have been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and who adhere to the doctrines of the New Testament. This includes the Churches of the various creeds and confessions, differing largely from one another, but holding fast to what is deemed the essential truth of the

gospel, and in spirit and conduct conforming to its principles. All the Confessions of Christendom concede that there is one visible Church of Jesus Christ on earth; but no one attains to the purity and perfection of the ideal state to which they all aspire. Neither can one be found which can make a just claim to be the one true Church to the exclusion of all the rest. They have all so much in common in this religious faith and life, and so much which distinguishes them from all other religious societies, as to justify us in considering them as one whole and calling them, in a wide sense, the Christian Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ is a great moral and spiritual fact. It is important to distinguish between the visible existence of the Church (its body) and the idea of a Church which is above the change of mere forms, and which is ever struggling for a complete expression of its inner life. The Church was born of a miracle and by a miracle lives. "Founded upon the great miracle of redemption, it grows and is perpetuated by the ever-repeated miracle of conversion."¹ It emerged from the malignity and hate attendant upon its birth, and has survived the repeated persecutions of the pagan world, ignorance and error, the misguided asceticism and fanaticism of the dark ages, and the strifes of its contending factions. The bitter controversies of the fourth century did not destroy it. It was struggling to maintain its purity, and emerged from the conflict with a better understanding and a truer definition of Christian truth. Neither was it destroyed by the conflicts of the sixteenth century, but emerged purer and better. Much of the false unscriptural accumulation of the dark ages was burned away by the fires through which it passed. This visible organized

¹ Pressense, *Early Years of Christianity*, p. 4.

body is essential to the existence and perpetuity of the work of God in the world. It is by this instrumentality that the forces of evil are to be antagonized, the gospel of Christ proclaimed, and the truth brought in contact with the hearts of men.

The Church as constituted in the apostolic age was a development; it was the employment of agencies to meet the needs of the work as it grew and advanced among men. The early disciples whom Jesus gathered about him formed the nucleus of the mighty hosts that in every age have constituted the visible Church of Christ. The apostles were called and appointed by our Lord, the men who were witnesses of his miracles and resurrection. After them came the deacons and ordination of elders in every church (Acts 6. 5; 14. 23). These were the earliest organized forms in the Christian Church. The concise statement of Saint Paul covers the organization as it existed in apostolic times: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4. 11). They were given by Christ to do his work: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"; for the instruction of the saints in the deep things of God; for the ministration of the Holy Sacraments, for aggressive propaganda, and for the edifying and building of the whole Christian society in its most holy faith.

The Roman, Greek, and high Anglican view assumes that the Church is a form of organized life imposed upon the Christian society in a sort of outward way. The Protestant doctrine is that the Church is the divinely inspired organic growth of the Christian life; not, therefore, a merely human society, but the society of the faithful constituted by the Divine Spirit. The Roman view

makes the outward form of the Church essential, and regards the internal nature derivative. The Protestant view regards the internal life as the essence, and the outward and visible form as derivative, but both as divinely inspired and constituted.

The term "visible Church," as used in this Article, is applicable to the Christians of one city, as the church of Alexandria; or of one nation, as the Church of England; or to the Christians of one form of faith or Church government, as the Presbyterian, Baptist, or Methodist Church. It may also be applied to a single congregation, which in government, doctrines, and usages may act independently and alone.

A congregation of faithful men.

At the time this Article was written the word "congregation" was used to designate the whole Church of Christ, and sometimes an aggregation of churches or congregations adhering to the same system of doctrine and church government, and existing in the same nation. In this sense it was applied to the Church of England, applies to the German churches, and is found in the Augsburg Confession: "The church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered." The "congregation of Christ" is the designation which the Scottish Reformers assumed in the reign of Queen Mary: "We shall maintain them, nourish them, and defend them, the whole congregation of Christ, and every member thereof, at our whole powers and wearing of our lives."

English divines emphasize the word "congregation" as implying that the Church is in some way united so as to be a definite body with a life of its own. "There is a great difference," says Goulbourn, "between an aggregation and a congregation." It means a body or society;

it is a system of members knit together into one organization and pervaded by one life.

The Church is a living organism, deriving its life from Christ. He presides over its interests, is never absent from it. "Lo, I am with you alway." That the Holy Spirit is operating on the hearts of its faithful members is a most blessed truth, and in them as a body the life of the Holy Ghost will be manifest. "It is a divine-human constitution in time and space: divine as to its ultimate ground and interior life, and human as to its form."¹ Because of its human elements and limitations it can seldom move as a whole, but the achievements of its distinctive parts are wonderful, and one part stimulates the rest, "provoking unto love and to good works." Its life is manifest in spreading the truth of God, in lifting up the oppressed, in its various benevolences, in its efforts for the salvation of the world. All these are perpetuated from age to age. It has a life derived from Christ its great Head, the Holy Spirit being the divine medium. The Church never dies.

What can be said of the large number of merely nominal Christians in the visible Church who have no vital union with Christ and yield not to the operations of the Holy Spirit? As spiritual life comes only to believers as such, it cannot be predicated of the wicked or nonbelieving, though baptized and enrolled in the visible Church. They are fruitless branches of a fruit-bearing vine which may be suffered to abide until the husbandman shall exercise his right of excision (John 15. 2).

There are certain marks or signs by which the visible Church is distinguished. The number and nature of these differ according to the views held in the definition of the Church. The authorized statement from the Roman view

¹ Dr. Gerhard, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1863.

is that they are unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity. The Lutheran Churches abide by the Augsburg Confession (Article VII), "that for the unity of the Church nothing more is required than the agreement concerning the doctrines of the gospels, and due administration of the sacraments."¹ The declaration of the Church of England is in its nineteenth Article, of which the one here considered is an abridgment. It limits the "notes" of the Church to two, the preaching of "the pure Word of God" and due administration of the sacraments. This Article is the authorized statement of the Methodist Episcopal Church on this question. These are distinctively "Protestant notes," and are applicable not to the mystical body of Christ, but to the visible Church, or to churches or congregations of believers. By these marks the outward visible Church may be distinguished, but they cannot distinguish individual members as the saints of God. The visible Church is broad and inclusive. "All who approve themselves believers in Christ, and who, whether as adults or as children, are baptized, belong to the external body, and are entitled to all its privileges. Due respect to the outward and visible Church requires the recognition of all baptized and consistent members of it, without demanding personal testimony of conscious experience."²

It must be understood, however, that the Church has the right and power to clear itself of gross offenders against Christian morality or its well-defined doctrines. Some formularies add the exercise of discipline as a "note" or mark of a true Church, and properly, for, if purity of doctrine and life is to be maintained, the exercise of discipline must always be a mark of a true Church. The Scotch Confession declares this in Article XVIII. The Church of England omits mention of this in its

¹ Schmucker, *Theology*, p. 183.

² Pope, *Theology*, vol. iii, pp. 278, 279.

Article, but we find it in its Homily for Whitsunday: "The true Church . . . hath always three notes or marks whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine, the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution, and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline." The Methodist Episcopal Church does not have this in its Article, but puts it in its General Rules. Following those rules is the disciplinary statement: "These are the General Rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observes them not, who habitually breaks any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season. But if then he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls." The Scripture references given in the Book of Discipline abundantly justify the disciplinary action.

The same three "notes" of the Church are given in the ordinal:

"The Bishop. Will you then give your faithful diligence always so to minister the Doctrine, and Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded?

"Ans. I will so do, by the help of the Lord."

In which the pure Word of God is preached.

The true preaching of the Word is inferred from the Holy Scriptures. The commission of our Lord included this. The apostles were to make disciples of all nations, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe all things that he had commanded them. Of the three thousand

converted in the first great gathering it is said, "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 42). Saint Paul said, "Christ sent me . . . to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1. 17). He charges Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4. 2). Throughout the epistles it is assumed that there is a definite body of teaching or doctrine to be handed on by the Church and her ministers: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2. 2).

The apostles assumed that they were the authorized teachers of the gospel, and from them there was no appeal (Gal. 1. 7). They did not speak in their own name, but in the name of Christ. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Cor. 11. 23; 15. 1, 2). The preaching of the pure Word of God includes the doctrines held by the Church that can be most surely proved from the Scriptures. The Methodist Episcopal Church regards as the Word of God the books of the Old and New Testaments, as we have them in the Authorized Version, and that these Scriptures are sufficient for salvation, without Apocrypha or tradition.¹ The earliest formula that has come down to the present time is the Apostles' Creed. This is held as a good summary of Christian doctrine and a good basis of Christian fellowship among the many branches of the one visible body or Church of Christ. Where the doctrines contained in that Creed are faithfully preached the requirements of this "note" or mark of the Church are fully met.

The Sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.²

¹ See Article V.

² See Articles XVI, XVII, XVIII.

There are two sacraments ordained of Christ in the gospel, namely, baptism and the Supper of our Lord. Baptism is the initiatory rite to the Church of Christ, and was made such by Christ himself. It is enjoined in the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19). The "things that of necessity are requisite" to the due administration of the sacrament of baptism are, water, to be applied to the subject; the use of the Scripture formula in its application, and an administrator. No question can arise as to the use of water recorded in the New Testament. Baptism, as an initiatory rite, without water is an absurdity. It is equally clear that the administrator is not left to his own discretion as to the words he shall use. "Christian baptism was directed to be in the name of three persons, which peculiarly implies, first, the form of words to be used by the administrator; second, the authority conveyed to receive such persons as had been made disciples into the Church and, consequently, into covenant with God; third, the faith required of the person baptized, faith in the existence of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in their character according to the revelation made of each, first by inspired teachers and in after times by their writings; and, fourth, consecration to the service of the three persons, having one name, which could be no other than that of the one God."¹

As to the administrator, it is evident that Christ did not baptize, or that the apostles did not regard it as their exclusive privilege. "Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4. 2). Paul said, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 1. 14-

¹ Watson's Institutes, vol. i, p. 635.

17). The baptism of converts was passed over to other officers of the Church.

In ordinary practice the Christian Church has always held that baptism be performed by ordained ministers. It is, however, the prevalent opinion of the Roman, Greek, and Protestant Churches that in extreme cases it is lawful for unordained persons, men or women, to baptize. It is the belief of the Greek, Roman, and High Church party in the Anglican and Lutheran Churches that baptism is a direct instrument of grace, the application of water being regarded as the appointed means by which God bestows regenerating grace upon men; therefore, in case death is probable before an ordained minister can be procured, unordained persons are permitted to baptize, using the scriptural formula. Such baptism is valid.

The second sacrament named is the Lord's Supper. The things requisite to a proper administration of this are, bread and wine, and a duly ordained administrator. It was instituted by our Lord himself; he was the first administrator; he consecrated the elements and gave them to the disciples. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 26-28). "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11. 26). It is a blessed memorial that connects the first and second advents of Christ.

Whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used has been subject of dispute between the Greek and Latin Churches. The Methodist Episcopal Church gives no direction, but almost exclusively uses the ordinary bread

of the household. It directs that whenever practicable nothing "but the pure, unfermented juice of the grape be used." The kneeling posture is generally adopted, but standing or sitting is permitted.

The administrator must be a duly ordained minister. He is ordained by the laying on of hands of the bishop and some of the elders present. The Church recognizes but two orders in the ministry, and only one can properly administer the Holy Communion. The deacon can administer baptism, and assist the elder in the Lord's Supper, but cannot consecrate the elements. The elder receives authority to do this in his ordination. The bishop addressing him says, "And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his Holy Sacraments"; then, presenting the Bible to him, says, "Take thou authority as an elder in the Church, to preach the Word of God, and to administer the Holy Sacraments in the congregation."

The outward visible Church, in the nature of the case, must have within it many who are merely nominal Christians, who while consistent in moral conduct have never passed the moral crisis of the new birth and felt the regenerating influence or power of the Holy Spirit. It is important that the restrictive sense of the invitation to the Holy Communion be impressed upon the minds of such: "Wherefore ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort." It should not be taken without self-examination, prayer, and renewed consecration. The sanctity of the sacrament, which is the seal of the communion of saints, and their

sign of profession among men, should be guarded by pastoral vigilance and mutual watchfulness.

In the city of Bristol, England, on the first day of September, 1784, Wesley, assisted by two presbyters of the Church of England, ordained Vasey and Whatcoat deacons, and on the next day ordained them elders or presbyters. On the same day he consecrated Thomas Coke superintendent or bishop of the Methodist societies in America.

In this lies the foundation of the Methodist Episcopal ministry. Its ordinations are presbyterial. Its episcopacy is an office, not an order. Provision is made for its perpetuity. If by death or otherwise no bishop remains, "the General Conference shall elect a bishop, and the elders, or any three of them, who shall be appointed by the General Conference for that purpose, shall consecrate him according to the Ritual."¹ The Methodist ministry is in a grand succession of holy men in the faith and labors of the holy apostles. It is likely that no ministers of any age or Church surpass, in intensity of zeal, fervency of spirit, or self-denying labors, the early ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

¹ Discipline, ¶ 172.

ARTICLE XIV

OF PURGATORY

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshiping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was framed by the English Reformers, first appearing in 1553. At that date the first words were, "The doctrine of the School-authors." In 1562 the phrase was changed to "The Romish doctrine." In that form it has remained, and was copied entire by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

At an early period in the Christian Church the thought was entertained that after death those who were not ready for heaven were kept in a place of preparation until fitted for the divine presence, and that the prayers of the living were an advantage to them in this intermediate state. This applied to believers who died in a state of grace, and was not a second probation for the wicked. The place of durance was purgatory—a word derived from the Latin *purgatorium*, the root of which is the verb *purgo*, "I cleanse." To the process of preparation Gregory the Great, in the year 595, added a tormenting fire. This the School-authors converted into a doctrine which they associated with papal indulgences till it came to apply to the dead generally. The change of the phrase from "The doctrine of the School-authors" to "The Romish doc-

trine" changed its aim from the Schoolmen, whose day was long past, to the current doctrines and practices of the Church at the time of the Reformation. The Article was framed before the Council of Trent, and could not have been aimed at the decision of that body.

The Church, at the time this Article was written, had long practiced the granting of pardons or indulgences, which were the remission of a temporal punishment without penance. The extreme mediæval or Romish party had also adopted gross forms of image and relic worship, and favors or graces the Church assumed to hold at her disposal could be bought with money. The more thoughtful and conservative party in the Church abhorred these things, and many were driven by them into the ranks of Reform. The Council of Trent had under consideration the subjects treated of in this Article at its twenty-fifth and last session, December 3 and 4, 1563. Instead of sweeping away the whole system of purgatorial punishments and papal indulgences, the Council endeavored to check the grosser forms of abuse, but established the unscriptural doctrines underlying them. This Article is therefore applicable to doctrines and practices of the Roman Church of to-day, and condemns them as repugnant to the Word of God.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory.

The idea of purgatory as taught by the Church of Rome is not known in Scripture, though there is clear evidence that the Jews and early Christians believed in an intermediate state between death and the judgment day. Into this state the souls of the dead entered, both good and bad. They did not believe that the pious dead entered a state of suffering, or that the suffering of the

wicked was of short duration. A few passages of Scripture indicate a place where departed souls abide until the time of the resurrection. Jesus said, in regard to the rich man and Lazarus, "In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." In contrast with the place and condition of the rich man he speaks of "Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke 16. 23). Without pressing in any degree the meaning of the parable, Hades is represented as a place of two distinct regions, and its inhabitants as souls in two distinct conditions; the righteous beyond the reach of pain and sorrow even in Hades. In accord with this are the words of Christ to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23. 43). "The primeval paradise was lost, and the name was transferred by the Jewish Church to the blessed section of Hades, or to the intermediate state between death and the resurrection. Beyond all doubt it was the intention of Jesus to designate *this* by the term *paradise* to the dying thief. The passage, therefore, presents an unanswerable proof of the existence both of a human soul separate from the body and a state of happy consciousness of the justified soul immediately after death and before resurrection."¹

It was in connection with this intermediate state and place that in a gradual way the concept of purgatory was built up, the idea of fires and cleansing being borrowed from heathen writings. Virgil, in his great epic "The Æneid," incorporates the idea. In the sixth book of that poem Anchises, the dead father of Æneas, when the Sibyl conducts him to the world of departed spirits, tells his son:

"So penal suffering they endure
For ancient crime to make them pure:

¹ Whedon, Commentary, in loco.

Some hang aloft in open view
For winds to pierce them through and through,
While others purge their guilt deep-dyed
In burning fire or whelming tide.
Each for himself, we all sustain
The durance of our ghostly pain.
Then to Elysium we repair,
The few, and breathe the blissful air;
Till many a length of ages past
The inherent taint is cleansed at last,
And naught remains but ether bright,
The quintessence of heavenly light.”¹

Plato, on the state of the soul after the death of the body, says: “The soul of the good man goes at once to some happy place; the souls that are incurable from the magnitude of their offenses are hurled into Tartarus never to come forth; and as for those who have passed a middle life, they suffer punishment for the iniquities they have committed, and then are set free, and each receives the reward of his good deeds according to his deserts.”

The difference between the purgatory of Plato and that of the Roman Church is not great; the first is the seed, the second is the flower. Again he says, “I entertain a good hope that something awaits those who die, and that, as was said long since, it will be *far better for the good than the evil*.”²

The early Church fathers incidentally allude to the abode of the righteous after death as a place of happiness, distinct from the abode of the wicked. Clement of Rome says: “All the generations from Adam, even unto this day, have passed away; but those who, through the grace of God, have been made perfect in love, now possess a place among the godly, and shall be made manifest at the revelation of the kingdom of Christ. For it is writ-

¹ Translation of Professor Conington, Oxford, England.

² Plato and Paul, p. 54.

ten, Enter into thy secret chambers for a little time, until my wrath and fury pass away; and I will remember a propitious day, and will raise you up out of your graves."¹ Justin Martyr says, "The souls of the pious remain in a better place, while those of the unjust and wicked are in a worse, waiting for the time of judgment."²

Mr. Wesley gives us the same thought in his sermon on "Dives and Lazarus." He says: "It is plain that paradise is not heaven. It is, indeed (if we may be allowed the expression), the antechamber of heaven, where the souls of the righteous remain till, after the general judgment, they are received into glory. . . . 'The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes.' . . . The word which is here rendered *hell* does not always mean the place of the damned. It is, literally, *the invisible world*, and is of very wide extent, including the receptacle of separate spirits, whether good or bad."³

So also our modern divines: "The intermediate world must necessarily consist of two departments, the one for the righteous, the other for the wicked. So we find it in the Scriptures, Paradise standing for the former and Gehenna for the latter. Dr. L. T. Townsend speaks of the one as Paradise-Hades, and of the other as Gehenna-Hades, a division clearly justified by the New Testament."⁴

The opinion prevails to a large extent that the souls of the righteous when separated from the body immediately enter heaven. Stephen said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God" (Acts 7. 56). "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus,

¹ First Epistle, chap. i.

² Dialogues, chap. v.

⁴ Plato and Paul, p. 605.

³ Works, vol. ii, p. 417.

receive my spirit" (verse 59). No doubt that prayer was answered.

Paul says, "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: . . . we are confident and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 6, 8).

When Jesus died on the cross he immediately departed with the soul of the thief to paradise, but he came forth on the third day for the resurrection, and forty days thereafter ascended to heaven, and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1. 3).

When the soul of the righteous is absent from the body he is at home with the Lord. There is certainly an intermediate *state*; in that state the soul of the Lord Jesus was between death and resurrection. In that state all human souls must be, and yet, the souls of the righteous dead, being absent from the body, are "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8, R. V.).

As to the intermediate *place*, or the investiture of the spirit in that state, we know nothing, and speculation is vain. Saint John shows us that the disembodied spirits of the saints "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth" (Rev. 14. 4). This implies the blessed discipline of communion with him, and an advancement in spiritual life and moral energy. A full revelation of those things has not been made, we may hope, but must wait in patience the coming of our Lord and the full revealment of the glory and destiny that await us. Let it suffice us to know that all who die in the Lord are united to him in his glorified, incarnate nature, and his heavenly abode is our home. It may be the change from the intermediate to the permanent may relate to the *state* and have no reference to *place*.

For the first three hundred years the Church of Christ

knew nothing of purgatory as the doctrine is now taught. The Church fathers of those centuries left nothing on record that can properly be construed to teach its existence. Tertullian is quoted as teaching purgatorial punishments in his *Treatise on the Soul*. He teaches that all souls are kept in Hades until the resurrection, the good anticipating their future bliss and the wicked their future misery. His writings indicate a belief in some moral improvement in the soul between death and the resurrection; but they furnish nothing out of which to build a doctrine. He gives nothing more than a pious opinion, or a fanciful interpretation of Matt. 5. 25, 26. This he wrote after he left the orthodox Christian Church and became a Montanist.

Other than the one mentioned, there are but two passages in the writings of the fathers of the first three centuries that indicate a thought of purgatory. One in the *Acts of the Martyr Perpetua* is visionary, based upon a dream and not worthy of serious notice.¹ The other is in the writings of Clement of Alexandria.² He thought Christ descended into Hades and preached the gospel to Jews and Gentiles. Speaking of Hades he says, "God's punishments are saving and disciplinary, leading to conversion." These brief sayings of the fathers furnish no foundation for the stupendous system of purgatory built up by the Roman Church.

Faint traces of a growing belief in some sort of purgatorial pain and cleansing are found in the fourth and fifth centuries, but nothing decisive as to the faith of the Church. Some place the origin of the doctrine with Augustine, but this cannot be established. At the close of the sixth century Gregory the Great taught that "a

¹ The Passion of Perpetua, chap. ii, 3, 4.

² Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, book vi.

purgatorial fire before the day of judgment for certain light offenses is to be believed." He has been called the inventor of the doctrine of purgatory and of the modern Romish doctrine of masses and transubstantiation. From the sixth century on the idea of purgatorial fires spread, and with it the doctrine of works of supererogation, and the traffic in masses for the souls in purgatory. In the popular mind the purifying fires of purgatory had taken the place of a living faith in eternal punishment, and the rich believed that they could buy with money exemption from, or mitigation of, a punishment equal in intensity, if not in duration, to the fires of hell. "Many believed in the real existence of purgatory as a material fire, which, however, in the absence of a body susceptible of physical sufferings, torments the lost souls in an ideal manner by means of the conception of suffering."¹

A doctrine, and the practices growing out of it, that had been so generally accepted in the Western Church demanded some explicit definition by an authoritative Council. The Council of Florence in 1439 on the subject of purgatory said, "The souls of those who die truly penitent in the love of God, before bringing forth fruit meet for repentance, are purified after death by the pains of purgatory; and they derive comfort in these pains from the prayers of the faithful on earth, as also by the sacrifice of the mass, alms, and other works of piety." These errors would affect the public mind and cause reaction. This authoritative declaration confirmed the worst features of the doctrine and practices that for centuries had been growing worse. It increased the demand for masses for the souls in purgatory, and for the supposed merit of works of supererogation held at the disposal of the Pope of Rome, and brought millions of money into

¹ Hagenbach's *History of Doctrine*, vol. ii, p. 126.

the treasury of the Church. These abuses hastened the coming of the Reformation.

The declaration of the Council of Trent is as follows: "The Catholic Church, following Holy Scripture and tradition, has always taught, and still teaches, that there is a purgatory, and that the souls which are detained there are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful and by the sacrifice of the mass."¹ The Council also gave some restrictive rules in relation to the presentation of the doctrine to the people. "Subtle questions" should be kept out of popular discourses. "Neither let them suffer the public mention, and treatment of uncertain points, or such as look like falsehood. But those things which tend to a certain kind of superstition, or which savor of filthy lucre, let them prohibit as scandals and stumbling-blocks of the faithful." This is really an acknowledgment of the abuses that were common.

The doctrine of purgatory as held by the Roman Church is as follows: That every man is subject both to temporal and eternal punishment for his sins; that God does indeed pardon sin, as to its eternal punishment, for the merits of Christ, but that the sinner is still liable to temporal punishment, which must be expiated by voluntary acts of penance here; that if the expiation does not suffice in this life there is an intermediate state in which departed souls suffer the remainder of their punishment, to purge them from the last stains of their sins.

Roman theologians assert that many holy men have suffered more for God and righteousness' sake than could properly be exacted for faults committed by them; that one can satisfy for another, or one can acceptably endure satisfactory punishments for another, because some suffer more than is due to their own sins; and, seeing all suf-

¹Sess. XXV, Dec. 3 and 4, 1563.

ferings are satisfactory, what they undergo more than is due their own is satisfactory for other men's sins. As they who thus undergo satisfactory punishment for others do not appoint the fruit of this their satisfaction to any particular persons, it therefore becomes profitable to the whole Church in common, so that it is now the common treasury of the Church, and from thence may be used whatsoever anyone lacks of due satisfaction. This common treasure is the foundation of pardons, the Church having power to apply this treasure of satisfaction and grant out pardons to those who comply with the conditions. A pardon or indulgence is the remission of a temporal punishment due to God without the sacrament of penance by the application of the satisfaction of Christ and the saints.¹

Pope Leo X in his decretal in 1518 said: "The Pope of Rome may for reasonable causes grant to the same saints of Christ, who, charity uniting them, are members of Christ, whether they be in this life or in purgatory, pardons out of the superabundancy of the merits of Christ and the saints."²

Worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relics.

Many of the early Christians were converts from Judaism, and nearly all the leaders had been reared in that faith. As a result of this faith they would naturally be prejudiced against the association of any image or pictorial representation with the worship of God. The second commandment, which was not abrogated by Christ, would be a safeguard against this. It is not surprising, therefore, that nothing is found about images earlier than the end of the second century. Tertullian mentions "the good Shepherd whom thou paintest on the chalice." The

¹ Abridged and extracted from Beveridge on the Articles, p. 404.

² Ibid.

character of Christ as the good shepherd was perhaps the most likely to commend itself to the minds and hearts of Christian people. Through all the centuries such representation of Christ has been the most popular and instructive.

Symbolic representations were used at an early age in the catacombs, the refuge and burial place of the Christians when Rome was pagan. The pictures were rude in character, but indicative of pathos, affection, and Christian hope. Statuary was specially identified with idolatry. Many of the heathen cities where the gospel was first preached were full of idols, deifying some human attribute or abstract idea, as fame or pleasure. A Greek writer said of Athens, "Our city is so full of deities that you may more frequently meet with a god than a man." These would be abhorrent to Christian Jews. Statuary was scarcely known in connection with churches until the end of the fifth century; but paintings of Christ, of the Virgin, and of saints became very common, and led to gross superstitious practices, more prevalent in the East than in the West. These paintings were called icons—meaning images. Miraculous powers were attached to some of them, and their worship became a scandal.

Leo the Isaurian, Emperor of Constantinople (718-741), issued an edict against their use, and ordered their destruction. This led to a long and bitter controversy. The Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome defended the use of the images against the edict of the emperor, showing the difference between relative and absolute worship.

In 754, at a Council in Constantinople, composed of three hundred and fifty-eight bishops, a decree was published against the use of images. Another Council was called at Nicæa in 786, which the iconoclastic party by

their treatment dissolved, but it was reconvened in 787, and the decree against the use of images was set aside and the following canon was passed: "With the venerable and life-giving cross shall be set up the venerable and holy images, whether in color, in Mosaic work, or any other material, within the consecrated Church of God, on the sacred vessels and vestments, on the walls, and on the tablets, on houses and in highways—the images, that is to say, of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, of the Immaculate mother of God, of the honored angels, of all saints and holy men. These images shall be treated as holy memorials, worshiped, kissed, only without that peculiar adoration which is reserved for the Invisible, Incomprehensible God."¹

The fight between the two factions continued until A. D. 840, when the advocates of image worship prevailed, and the "feast of orthodoxy" was established to commemorate their victory.

After this the error spread and the abuses grew worse. Mosheim gives a fearful picture of the state of the Church in the tenth century: "Both Greeks and Latins placed the essence and life of religion in the worship of images and departed saints, in searching after with zeal and preserving with a devout care and veneration the sacred relics of holy men and women, and in accumulating riches upon the priests and monks, whose opulence increased with the progress of superstition. Scarcely did any Christian dare to approach the throne of God without rendering first the saints and images propitious by a solemn round of expiatory rites and lustrations."²

The long continuance of these erroneous doctrines, and the prevalence of the abuses growing out of them, are

¹ Milman, *Latin Christianity*, vol. ii, p. 391.

² *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. X, part ii, chap. iii, sec. i.

sad evidences of the persistence of evil and the perversity of human judgment when temporal interests are involved. These errors and abuses brought power to the priesthood and gold to the treasury of the Church. The Council of Trent (1563), while regretting the abuses, enjoined the worship of images and relics. It ordered "bishops and others concerned in teaching the people to instruct them concerning the honor due to the relics and tombs of the saints, and the lawful use of images." It condemned those who say these things ought not to be worshiped. These instructions and canons are in force to-day; and the characterization of the Article is as relevant to existing conditions as it was in 1562 or in 1784.

And also invocation of saints.

The invocation of saints finds no justification in the practices of the primitive Church, but many testimonials against its lawfulness can be cited from the early Church fathers. Justin Martyr said Christ taught "that we ought to worship God alone. He thus persuaded us, The greatest commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."¹ Origen wrote: "To worship anyone besides the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is the sin of impiety."

The invocation of saints was a growing superstition, but was not confirmed by the Church until the end of the fourth century. The Romish theologians made a distinction between prayers addressed to God himself, as the author and giver of all good, and invocation of the saints, not asking them for the blessings they desired, but asking their intercessions in the name of Christ on their behalf. "Thus, in theory, the prerogative of God as the only independent Author of good, and the sole mediatorship of Christ, were guarded. It is obvious,

¹ First Apology, chap. xvi.

however, that in practice these two great truths might, with unlearned people, easily be obscured, as in fact they were, and that to such an extent that it is scarcely too much to say that by the sixteenth century invocations of the saints had taken a grotesque polytheism."¹ So Erasmus wrote concerning customs of his time: "In fact, as many things as there are that we either fear or wish for, so many gods have we made for them."

The Council of Trent "orders bishops and others concerned in the teaching of the people to instruct them concerning the invocation of saints, . . . according to the doctrine of the Church, the consent of the fathers, and the decrees of the Councils; to teach them that the saints offer up prayers for men, and that it is useful to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers and help. It further condemns those who maintain that the saints in rest ought not to be invoked, that they do not pray for men, that it is idolatry to invoke them, that it is contrary to Holy Scripture, etc."²

Our Saviour says: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4. 10). On this subject Wesley says: "As divine worship is due to God, so it is not lawful to give it to any other. The Church of Rome doth acknowledge this, but says the worship they give to saints and angels is not of that kind. But what worship is peculiar to God if prayer is not? So thought Saint Ambrose: 'Thou only art to be invoked.' For God alone can receive our prayer, or can give what we pray for, or be the object of our faith and trust. . . . After what manner do they pray to saints? They pray to them as favorites with God, that they would take them into their protection, and would obtain those things of God for them which they want. Therefore,

¹ Green on the Articles.

² McClintock and Strong, Cyclopædia.

they plead that they have two different forms of prayers; for to God they properly say, 'Have mercy upon us, hear us'; to a saint, 'Pray for us.'"¹

It is in vain that the Roman Church pleads a difference in the forms of prayer; the theory is based upon sophistry, and the practice belies it. It was not true of the pre-Reformation Church, it is not true of the Church of Rome of the present day. The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, are too much lost sight of, and the mediation of the one Mediator between God and man is discarded for that of saints and angels.

Green quotes the following from Liguori's *Glories of Mary*, and says the prayers have papal sanction:

"Often we shall be heard more quickly, and be thus preserved, if we have recourse to Mary and call upon her name, than we should if we called on the name of Jesus our Saviour."

"Many things are asked from God, and are not granted; they are asked of Mary, and are obtained."

"At the command of the Virgin all things obey, even God."

"Mary has only to speak and her Son executes all."²

This subordinates God the Father and God the Son to Mary. If it be not blasphemy, it is close upon its border.

A fond³ thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

These Romish doctrines of purgatory, worshiping and adoration of images and relics, and invocation of saints are condemned by the Article in the same phraseology.

It may be readily seen that the doctrine of purgatory is founded upon an unscriptural distinction between venial and mortal sin, and also between temporal and eternal

¹ Works, vol. v, pp. 777, 778.

² On the Articles.
³ "Fond," foolish. "Thou *fond* mad man, hear me but speak a word."—Romeo and Juliet, III, iii, 52.

punishment, by reference to an authorized catechism of the Roman Church:

“Q. In what cases do souls go to purgatory?

“A. Souls go to purgatory when they die in less sins, which we call venial, or when they have not satisfied the justice of God for former transgressions.

“Q. What is mortal sin?

“A. Mortal sin is that which kills the soul and deserves hell.

“Q. What is venial sin?

“A. Venial sin is that which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God.

“Q. How do you prove there is a purgatory?

“A. We prove that there is a purgatory, because the Scripture teaches (1) that God will render to every man according to his works (Rom. 2. 6), and (2) that nothing defiled shall enter heaven (Rev. 21. 27), and (3) that some Christians ‘shall be saved, yet so as by fire’ (1 Cor. 3. 15), and (4) that it is a holy and wholesome thing to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins” (2 Macc. 12. 45).¹

The Protestant answers to these are simple: (1) This refers to the judgment day, and will be fulfilled; beyond it there can be no change. (2) “Nothing defiled will enter heaven,” because all will have “washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” before death. (3) “Saved as by fire.” This refers to popes, bishops, priests, preachers, and other builders. The work done and material used will be tested by fire. The doctrines taught, the morals enjoined, the Church government founded, all will be tried by a fiery ordeal. Some believe the fire of severe persecution is meant; more think

¹ A General Catechism of Christian Doctrine for the Use of Catholics in the United States of America.

the day of Christ's coming to judgment. What Christ approves will be commended and rewarded, what he condemns will be burned, and the builder will "suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." If the Romanist could show that it meant purgatory, it must be a purgatory for the priest, not for the people. (4) This is quoted from an apocryphal book; as there is no evidence of its inspiration, no doctrine can be based upon it.

The following are also quoted by Romanist writers in proof of purgatory: "We went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place" (Psa. 66. 12). "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night" (Isa. 4. 5). Every principle of just interpretation would refer these paragraphs to the present life. Their use in support of purgatory and doctrines growing out of it is set aside by Protestant scholars as "a ridiculous attempt at malpractice in exegesis."

The doctrine of purgatory is an attempt to supplement the supreme satisfaction of Christ. It minifies his atonement and puts dishonor upon it. If it releases the soul from mortal sin why not from venial? That those who die in a state of grace are yet in torment is a contradiction. It contradicts many positive portions of God's Word. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8. 1). "Whom he justified, them he also glorified" (verse 30). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (verses 33, 34.) The work of the Holy Spirit in application of the atoning blood of Christ is perfect before the soul leaves the body. The Scriptures so affirm. If the figure

of refining gold is given it is, "I purely purge away thy dross." If water be the figure it is, "I shall be whiter than snow." If it be a renewal it is, "In righteousness and true holiness." If it respects the efficacy of Christ it is, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost." A hope of purity based on purgatorial suffering is a vain hope. "No suffering but that of Christ has any power to expiate sin; and no fire but that of love can purify the soul, either in time or in eternity."¹

The declarations of the Roman Church concerning pardons and indulgences sound like blasphemy to intelligent Protestants, making the merits of Christ the subject of a base commercialism, which in its scope reaches to the abodes of the disembodied spirits of the dead.

The doctrine of pardon as held by Protestants and taught in God's Word is significant in contrast. Pardon is the act of forgiving an offender, or removing the guilt of sin, that the punishment due may not be inflicted. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psa. 32. 1, 2). David prayed that his transgressions be blotted out, his sin cleansed, his iniquities washed away (Psa. 51. 1, 2). This is an act of free grace by God according to his loving-kindness and "the multitude of his tender mercies." Confession should be made to God, not to man; and when this condition of forgiveness is complied with, accompanied by faith in "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son," God, as an act of justice, will forgive our sin, because the atonement makes satisfaction, so that God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26). The author of pardon is God. Ministers are authorized to declare there is remission of sins in Christ. "Who-

¹ Wesley, Works, vol. ii, p. 417.

soever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10. 43).

Man can do nothing by which pardon can be procured aside from personal repentance and faith. Money cannot buy it, good works cannot merit it, water baptism cannot secure it. Nothing but the blood of Jesus can wash away sin, and none but God can forgive it.

The Roman Church practices sacramental absolution. According to the decision of the Council of Trent the priest is judge as well as minister, and the formula is, "As the minister of Jesus Christ, I remit thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It is plain that the New Testament does not sanction the power claimed by the Roman hierarchy, and it is altogether inconsistent with the teaching of the earlier Church fathers. When Christ says to his ministers, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20. 23), he commissions them to declare the Christian terms of pardon and to exercise Church discipline.

The Methodist Episcopal Church sets itself against all worshipping, adoration, and invocation other than that addressed to God. The good must venerate the memory of the saints, who are saints indeed, canonized or uncanonized, but to effect our salvation we do not need them. The relation of the Virgin Mary to the gospel dispensation and to the divine Saviour is exceptional. In every respect it seems so sacred that we cannot enter upon it, even in thought, without feeling that we "stand on holy ground." As mother of the Saviour of the world she holds a peculiar position. We may rightly attribute to her the most beautiful traits of womanly character, and revere her as the highest model of female purity, love, and piety. In her relation to the history of redemp-

tion, as the mother of Christ, she must forever stand alone. But in her relation to the Church, and her utterances of divine truth, we may place her with other holy women who have been instruments of the Holy Spirit. The Word of God shows us the place of rest for heavy-laden souls; the way by which we come direct to the Father, and the name through which we come to God in prayer, and through which we must be saved. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14. 6). "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (verse 14). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4. 12). "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6). "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2. 1).

ARTICLE XV

OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, to have public prayer in the Church, or to administer the Sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed by the English Reformers in 1553, and rewritten with some immaterial changes in 1562. It was adopted entire by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

At an early period of the Christian era the Latin language was understood throughout the Western part of Christendom. The Romans, as masters of the Western world, imposed their language upon the peoples of the provinces, so that Latin was the common tongue of Europe, and became the language of liturgical worship. The Church being a permanent institution in which service was continuously held, the language was conserved in its service, while it gradually ceased to be a living tongue among the people. As the centuries passed the great majority of the people did not understand the tongue used in prayers and sacraments. There was a disposition on the part of the clergy to surround the sacred ordinances with a veil of mystery. "A feeling, too, that as the Church was one and yet universal, so there should be but one universal tongue in which her prayers and praises should go up to God, lent a coloring

of piety and poetry to the old custom of having Latin liturgies.”¹

The Article as first framed in 1553 declared that “It is moste semelie, and moste agreable to the Woorde of God, that in the congregation nothing be openlie readde, or spoken in a tongue vnknownen to the people, the whiche thinge S. Paule didde forbidde except some were presente that should declare the same.”

In 1562 the Council of Trent anathematized those who say that “the mass ought only to be celebrated in the vulgar tongue.”² The English Reformers accepted the challenge, changed the wording of the Article, and declared the practice of praying or administering the sacraments in an unknown tongue “plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church.”

III. THE EXPOSITION

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God.

The gift of tongues, the great miracle of Pentecost, enabled the apostles and disciples to proclaim the gospel so that “strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,” and many others, should hear in their own tongues “the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2. 10, 11). That miraculous gift did not end with that first scene of gospel triumph; it was continued during the apostolic age. It is evident God designed that the common people should have and understand every part of divine worship.

Many passages of Scripture could be cited to prove this: “Let all things be done unto edifying” (1 Cor. 14. 26). There can be no edification when the people know not what is said. “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no

¹ Browne on the Articles, p. 579.

² Sess. XXII, chap. ix.

man understandeth him" (verse 2). "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful" (verse 14). "Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" (verse 16.) "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all: yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (verses 18, 19). "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (verse 15).

The whole chapter in which these texts occur bears directly upon this subject. The gift of tongues in the Corinthian church was peculiar to the apostolic age, but the rules laid down by Paul to govern the exercise of the gift are applicable to any age. It is the same whether the tongues be a special miraculous gift or acquired by study, the use of the language must be for the edification of the congregation. This applies to speaking, praying, or singing. When an earnest, fervent prayer is offered, that awakens a deep yearning of soul in all who hear it, the responsive Amen makes it the prayer of all though voiced by one. And the Spirit-filled worshipers voicing to each other deep spiritual truth, singing with the spirit and with the understanding also, making melody in their hearts unto the Lord, render a service profitable unto themselves and acceptable unto God.

And the custom of the primitive Church.

The public worship of God in early Christian times was conducted in the common language of the people. The earliest forms were very simple. Jesus taught his disci-

ples to pray, and gave them the beautiful form of prayer now universally used in the Christian Church. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the most sacred of all parts of our privilege and worship. It was instituted by our Lord with most impressive words and symbols, and closed with a song of praise.¹

Incidental allusions to public worship by patristic writers indicate that the form of worship was simple and much the same in all the churches, and always in the vernacular. Justin Martyr gives a fair idea of the form of worship, and the administration of the Lord's Supper. "On the day called Sunday," he writes, "all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons."²

Pliny's letter to Trajan indicates the same kind of service: "They affirmed that the whole of their fault lay in this: that they were accustomed to meet on a stated day before it was light, and sang among themselves, alternately, a hymn to Christ as a God (or addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ as to some God)

¹ "Probably no more than a kind of recitative reading or chanting. As to the hymn itself, we know, from the universal consent of Jewish antiquity, that it was composed of Psalms 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, always sung at every paschal solemnity."—A. Clarke.

² First Apology, chap. lx.

and bound themselves by an oath (*sacramento*) not to the commission of any wickedness. . . . When these things were performed it was their custom to separate, and then to come together again to a meal promiscuous and harmless."

Origen says: "Christians in prayer do not even use the precise names which divine Scripture applies to God; but the Greeks use Greek names, the Romans Latin names, and everyone prays and sings praises to God as he best can, in his mother tongue. For the Lord of all the languages of the earth hears those who pray to him in each different tongue, hearing, if I may so say, but one voice expressing itself in different dialects. For the Most High is not as one of those who select one language, Barbarian or Greek, knowing nothing of any other, and caring nothing for those who speak in other tongues."¹

As fast as the countries were evangelized the worship of God was conducted in an orderly way in the language of the people. Liturgical forms did not appear until the latter part of the third century or the beginning of the fourth. The earliest known form is in the Apostolic Constitutions. In this work are to be found an order of worship and a "divine liturgy."² After this liturgies multiplied in the languages of the countries where the Church had been established. The Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, and Latin Churches had their liturgies.

As the Pope of Rome assumed superiority over other Churches the Latin liturgy prevailed in the Churches of the West. During the course of the ninth century, in consequence of the irruption of the Goths and the subversion of the Roman empire, the Latin language as the common language of the people ceased in Europe. In

¹ Against Celsus, chap. xxxvii.

² Constitutions of the Holy Apostles, book ii, chap. lvii; book viii, chap. vi.

the eleventh century the use of the Latin liturgy was imposed upon the entire Western Church by Pope Gregory VII in order to support the papal pretensions; but more and more among the people the Latin became an unknown tongue. It is no longer a living language and is known only to the learned, but the Roman hierarchy has never changed the liturgy to meet the wants of the people. Though in modern times some prayers are offered in churches of the Roman communion in tongues understood by the people, yet the mass is never celebrated in any but the Latin, and the consecration is spoken in a low voice. The veil of mystery is still drawn, and the Tridentine anathema is still in force.

ARTICLE XVI

OF THE SACRAMENTS

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisible in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the Apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as Saint Paul saith, 1 Cor. 11. 29.

I. THE ORIGIN

The first section of this Article appeared in the thirteenth of the Augsburg Confession of 1530, and in the ninth of the Thirteen Articles of 1538, which were the joint production of English and German divines. In 1553 it began with a quotation from Saint Augustine:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ hathe knitte together a companie of newe people with sacramentes, moste fewe in number, moste easie to be kept, moste excellent in significance, as is Baptisme, and the Lord's Supper."¹ In 1562 it was brought into the form in which it now stands, in which the quotation from Saint Augustine was omitted. The order of the two main paragraphs was reversed, and between them two fresh paragraphs were inserted on the number of sacraments ordained by Christ, and the five rites "commonly called sacraments." In its present form it came into the Thirty-nine Articles in 1571, and was adopted by Wesley without change.

II. THE AIM

The purpose of the Article was to condemn at once the disparaging views of the sacraments taught by the Anabaptists and certain of the Swiss Reformers, notably the Zwinglians—which latter held them to be only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, and the exaggerated and erroneous doctrines of the Church of Rome, which arbitrarily decreed the holiness and efficacy of spurious sacraments.

Up to the eleventh century but two sacraments were known to the Christian Church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. Before that time no other is mentioned in any scripture, or ancient council, creed, or author.

In the twelfth century an effort was made to establish a definition of the term "sacrament" and to determine the number of them. The sacraments, according to the theoretic view of the scholastic philosophy, were mystical unions of words with sensible things by which the real passion of Christ was both signified and applied to the soul of man, the visible channels through which virtue

¹ Epistle liv.

was conveyed from Christ himself to his mystical body, the Church.

In determining the number, the sacred number seven was fixed upon especially through the influence of Peter Lombard. Dupin says Lombard was the chief scholastic of his time, that his work served as a foundation for other doctors "who did nothing else but comment upon it."¹ Mosheim says, "The compilations of Peter Lombard were preferred to the doctrines and precepts of Jesus Christ."² The reputation of this theologian and the popularity of his work, with the theory of the School-authors, easily account for the acceptance of seven sacraments.

The fanciful expositions of Scripture common to the time led in the same direction. From that biblical expression "the seven Spirits of God" there arose a conceit of the sevenfold operation of the Spirit; and it seemed illustrative of this to assume seven sacraments.

The idea was confirmed by a decree of the Council of Florence in 1439, and promulgated in a synodal epistle from Pope Eugenius to the Armenians in 1442. It was adopted by the Council of Trent at its seventh session (1547), when the following canon was passed: "If any one shall say that the sacraments of the new law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord; or that they are more or less than seven, namely, baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be anathema."³

The Article as framed by the Reformers clearly distinguishes baptism and the Holy Communion from the five rites "commonly called sacraments," and insists upon a right disposition on the part of the recipients.

¹ History of the Church, Cent. XII, chap. xii.

² Ecclesiastical History, Cent. XII, part ii, note.

³ Sess. VII, chap. i.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

The word "sacrament" is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which came from the military oath of the Romans, and so far bears the mark of that derivation, as it denotes a solemn pledge of faith on the part of the receiver.

Patristic writers used the word "sacrament" to signify a mystery, something unknown until revealed; hence, an emblem, type, or rite having some latent scriptural meaning. In this sense the Greek fathers applied it to baptism and the Lord's Supper. The Latin fathers applied the word *sacramentum* to anything sacred in itself or having the power of binding or consecrating men; they also used it in the sense of a mystery, something known only to the initiated or instructed.

A sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself." The true idea of the sacraments is that they are acts of religion, in each of which there are two contracting parties represented, namely, God and the Christian believer. The believer makes certain vows of fidelity to God, and God promises to afford his assistance in the great work of salvation. These acts signify the divine will and a communication of divine grace, and therefore must be founded or authorized by God himself. They are not merely duties, but sacred rites in which God himself bears a part. In them God embraces us, and offers himself to be embraced by us. They present

to the outward senses the inward workings of God's free mercy, and seal in our hearts the promises of God. The benefits to be derived from the sacraments are God's grace and good will toward man, and his invisible work in him by his Holy Spirit.

The visible symbols quicken, strengthen, and confirm faith in God. "Matter is of the essence of a sacrament; for words without some material thing to which they belong may be of the nature of prayers or vows, but they cannot be sacraments. Receiving a sacrament is on our part our faith plighted to God in the use of some material substance or other; for in this consists the difference between sacraments and other acts of worship. The latter are only acts of the mind declared by words or gestures, whereas sacraments are the application of a material sign, joined with acts of the mind, words, and gestures. With the matter there must be a form; that is, such words joined with it as do appropriate the matter to such a use, and separate it from all other uses, at least in the act of the sacrament."¹

Baptism has all the elements of a sacrament. Water is applied to the person by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; and the form of words was given by Christ himself, and is used in every valid baptism: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The adult subject surrenders to Christ, pledges fidelity to him, and through the Holy Ghost receives from him, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Pet. 3. 21).

The sacrament of baptism is a recognition of the recipient's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In the case of infants who cannot exercise faith or give pledges of

¹ Burnet on the Articles, p. 350.

future fidelity, parents or sponsors assume the responsibility, and promise that as soon as the child is able to learn he shall be taught all essential knowledge of Christian discipleship. In the case of adults it is the rite of admission to Christian fellowship.

The visible sign of baptism reminds us of the pardoning love of God and the cleansing power of the Divine Spirit, and is typical of the remission of sin. It signifies a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.

The visible things of the Lord's Supper impress the mind with the great facts of the gospel that relate to personal and experimental salvation. The bread and wine are the material substances; the act of Christ in presenting the bread and wine, and the words used, are the form: "Take, eat; this is my body"; "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament."

As the symbol of water in the sacrament of baptism is more than a badge of profession or an outward sign of Church fellowship, so, too, these symbols of the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God are much more than "a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another."¹ These tangible things that may be seen and tasted, the prescribed form of words which accompanies their administration, deeply impress the mind, and the Holy Spirit works invisibly in the partaker, through them, for his moral purity.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

The Article is explicit. It is significant that the only sacraments found in the New Testament were ordained by Christ. The doctrines of the gospel were largely developed by the apostles, especially by Paul, but the sac-

¹The Anabaptist view at the time of the Reformation.

raments stand as instituted by Christ without change, perfect in themselves.

Baptism, though first in its application to the individual, was last in its institution. It came as a part of the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28. 19). Thus baptism became a permanent institute of the Christian Church. It runs parallel with the command to teach all nations, and with the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is universal in its application to converts of all nations, and can never be abrogated.

The sacrament of the Holy Communion was instituted by Christ. No words could be better suited than those of the Master himself with which to present this institution: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 26-28). The command is not wanting: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22. 19). "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11. 26, R. V.). This is the declaration of the federal act on man's part. He proclaims to the world Christ's atoning death and the believer's acceptance of its avails. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" It is a participation, an appropriation by faith of the merits of Christ for personal salvation. This is the believer's testimony in memory of Christ "till he come"; it is a duty he owes to Christ and to the world.

The apprehension of the spiritual benefits can never set aside the outward act.

Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the Apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

Confirmation

The ceremony of confirmation originated in a rite anciently known as Chrism, or the Seal, which was thought to add the positive gift of the Spirit to the baptismal removal of guilt.

Apostolic example is claimed as a basis of this. Acts 8. 12-17 is especially cited. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (verse 12). When the apostles at Jerusalem heard of this they sent Peter and John unto them, who prayed for them and "laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (verse 17).

The Roman Church holds confirmation to be a sacrament ordained of Christ or his apostles. It supplies chrism, a mixture of olive oil and balm, as the matter to be applied to the subject. This must be peculiarly blessed by the bishop, who is the only minister of that rite. The form is application of this chrism to the forehead, with these words: "Signo te signo crucis, et confirmo te crismate salutis, in nomine Patris, Filii, et Spiritus sancti"—"I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee

with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Extraordinary gifts followed the laying on of hands of the apostles, as an attestation of the divine origin of Christianity. But as a sacrament confirmation has no foundation in Scripture; it is not an institution of Christ. As used by the Roman Church it is a priestly invention with nothing in matter or form to commend it. In the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church it is a formal rite administered by a bishop by which baptized persons are fully admitted into Church fellowship by the imposition of hands and of prayer. It is observed in the Lutheran and Reformed Churches with special reference to the renewal of the baptismal covenant taken earlier by the candidate or his sponsors. Some churches continue its use merely as an appropriate and a scripturally authorized means of grace, but as a sacrament it is rejected by all Protestants.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has no rite of confirmation with the imposition of hands, but it has something analogous to it; that is, the reception of probationers into full membership after having been for six months on trial. The probationers are catechumens, having experienced the blessing of justification, or at least having "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." The term of probation is one of special instruction. At the time of admission into full membership there is required a declaration of saving faith in Jesus Christ, and a renewal of the baptismal covenant in a public and impressive manner.

Penance

This is the outward profession, as repentance is the inward feeling, of sorrow for sin. It was probably bor-

rowed from the discipline of the Jewish synagogue. In the primitive Christian Church it related only to such persons as had been excluded from the communion of the Church. In times of persecution some, through fear of suffering or death, apostatized, and when peace was restored desired to return. In such cases penance was imposed. Its object was not so much the forgiveness of the offender by the Lord God as that offender's reconciliation to the Church. The early Church fathers declare expressly that the Church offers pardon only for offenses against herself; the forgiveness of all sin is with God. In process of time penance was applied to all sin after baptism; public confession became auricular, and ultimately the rite was elevated into a sacrament. In relation to penance the Council of Trent decreed as follows: That Jesus instituted this sacrament when he breathed upon his disciples, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20. 22); that in this sacrament the priest exercises the function of a judge; that the *form* of the sacrament is contained in the form of the absolution pronounced by the priest; that the penitential acts are contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which are, as it were, the *matter* of the sacrament; that an imperfect contrition is called attrition, when it arises from a sense of shame for the sin committed; that if this be accompanied by a hope of forgiveness, and if it exclude the desire to commit sin, it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and disposes the penitent to obtain the grace of God in the sacrament of penance; that it is necessary to confess every mortal sin that can be brought to mind; that the power of binding and loosing is in the priest only; that this consists in not merely declaring the remission of sins, but in the judicial act by which they are remitted; that great crimes should not be absolved by every priest, but reserved for the first order;

that we can make satisfaction to God by self-imposed inflictions, and by those which the priest prescribes.¹

The imposition by the priest of penance is the condition on which temporal punishment for the sin will be remitted, while the eternal consequences are forgiven for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ. "These temporal penalties may be exacted in this life or in the intermediate state, both being temporal. . . . On this sacrament of penance hangs the doctrine of purgatory, the scene where the supreme satisfaction of Christ is supplemented; as also indulgences, based on the fund of merit stored in the Church, and granted avowedly for the remission of temporal penalty, often, in popular acceptance, for the remission of all sin whatever."²

Penance, however, cannot be said to have "any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God." The *matter* is wanting; but the Roman doctors are equal to the occasion and call contrition, confession, and satisfaction "*quasi materia*"—matter, after a sort. Wesley writes: "We grant confession to men to be in many cases of use: public, in case of public scandal; private, to a spiritual guide for disburdening of the conscience, and as a help to repentance. But to make auricular confession, or particular confession to a priest, necessary to forgiveness and salvation, when God has not so made it, is apparently to teach for doctrine the commandment of men."³

Protestant theology teaches that penance has no foundation whatever in Scripture, and is contrary to some of the most essential principles of the Christian religion; particularly to justification by faith in Jesus Christ alone on the ground of his complete or finished work; the theory of penance being, in fact, founded upon a doctrine of at least supplementary atonement by the works or suffer-

¹ Sess. XIV.

² Pope. Theology, vol. iii, p. 308.

³ Works, vol. v, p. 792.

ings of man. Can anything make a satisfaction to God save the obedience and suffering of his Son? What need of another satisfaction after that of the Saviour? "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 14). The song of the redeemed will be, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1. 5, 6).

Orders

The Council of Trent declares, "Ordination is truly and properly a sacrament, and doth confer grace, and whoso denies this is accursed."¹ Moreover, it anathematizes "those who deny that orders imprint an ineffaceable character."

In reply to this stand the plain pronouncements of Protestant theologians: "Once more the outward sign cannot be traced back to the gospel or to our Lord's own ordinance. Moreover, the grace given in it is official, rather than for the personal sanctification of the recipient."² "We account ordination to be of divine institution, and that by it a ministerial commission is conveyed; but how necessary soever this office is to the Church, and grace for the exercise of it, yet as that grace is not promised to it we cannot admit it to be properly and truly a sacrament."³

Archbishop Secker declares that if ordination were a sacrament there would be as many sacraments as there are orders; "but indeed," he says, "there is none: for the laying on of hands in ordination is neither appointed nor used to signify any spiritual grace, but only to confer

¹ Sess. VII, chap. i.

² Gibson on the Articles, p. 605.

³ Wesley, Works, vol. v, p. 794.

a right of executing such an office in the Church of Christ. And though prayers for God's grace and blessing on the person ordained, are indeed very justly and usefully added, and will certainly be heard unless the person be unworthy, yet these prayers on this occasion no more make a sacrament than any other prayers for God's grace on any other occasion."¹

Matrimony

The Council of Trent at its twenty-fourth session (1563) legislated on the subject of matrimony in twelve canons. The first reads: "Whoever shall affirm matrimony is not truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the evangelical law, instituted by Christ our Lord, but that it is a human invention introduced into the Church, and does not confer grace, let him be accursed."²

There are many points in relation to marriage in which Romanists and Protestants agree, but as to its constituting a sacrament they totally disagree. The Roman Church bases its view, in part, upon the words of Saint Paul: "This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the church" (Eph. 5. 32, R. V.). The rendering of this passage in the Vulgate is, "Sacramentum hoc magnum est."³ Archbishop Secker says upon this: "But the whole matter is, that they have happened most ridiculously to mistake their own Latin translation of the New Testament, where Saint Paul, having compared the union between the first married pair, Adam and Eve, to that between Christ, the Second Adam, and his spouse the Church; and having said that this is a great mystery; a figure, or comparison, not fully and common-

¹Sermon on the Sacraments.

²Sess. XXIV, chap. i.

³Green on the Articles, p. 194.

ly understood; the old interpreter, whose version they use, for mystery hath put sacrament, which in his days signified anything in religion that carried a hidden meaning, and they have understood him of what we now call a sacrament, whereas, if everything that once had that name in the larger sense of the word were at present to have it in the stricter sense, there would be a hundred sacraments instead of the seven which they pretend there are."¹

The Church of Rome acknowledges that a sacrament must be instituted by Christ, yet though the Council of Trent declared that matrimony is a sacrament so instituted there is no proof of this. In every sacrament there must be "an outward and visible sign"; in marriage there is none. It is inconsistent also to regard marriage as a sacrament, and at the same time disparage it in refusing it to the clergy, and to teach the superior sanctity of a celibate life. The Lateran Council says, "Those in holy orders are the temple of God, and it is a shameful thing that they should serve uncleanness."² To this Wesley replies: "The apostle, on the contrary, saith, 'Marriage is honorable in all' (Heb. 13. 4), and gives a hard character of that doctrine which forbids it (1 Tim. 4. 1-3). And how lawful it was the direction of the apostle about it (1 Tim. 3. 2) doth show. And how convenient it is, is manifest from the mischiefs attending the prohibition of it in the Romish Church, which wise men among themselves have lamented."³ Marriage, though not a sacrament, is a religious rite, a divine institution.

Extreme Unction

Extreme unction is administered by the priests to the sick who are supposed to be past recovery, and is believed

¹ Sermon on the Sacraments.

² Council II, chap. vi.

³ Works, vol. v, p. 795.

to give final pardon for sin with all necessary assistance in the hour of death. The Council of Florence (1439) decreed it to be a sacrament, and the Council of Trent confirmed, defined, and established it.

The latter stated that it is a sacrament instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; that it was recommended to the faithful by Saint James, and that its use is indicated by Saint Mark; that the matter of the sacrament is oil consecrated by a bishop; that the form consists of the words used when the unction is applied to the person; that its effect is to wipe out the remains of sin, to reassure and comfort the soul of the recipient by exciting within him full confidence in God's mercy, and sometimes to restore the health of the body. In support of this the work of the apostles is quoted: "They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6. 13). "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5. 14).

There is no proof that Jesus instituted this as a sacrament. It has neither matter nor form, as originating with Christ; nor is there any intimation in primitive Church history that oil was used sacramentally, although it was used medically for restoration accompanied by prayer for its efficacy.

In every age, in every place where Christian truth is known, prayer is offered for the sick, and perhaps oftener than is supposed God's blessing is given in answer to this prayer, and life is spared. In such cases healing of the soul as well as of the body has been graciously given. In the apostolic age a miraculous gift of healing was given to some. That gift was exercised in connection with an anointing with oil. The miraculous was withdrawn, and thenceforth there was no need of the sign

since the power to heal had ceased. But the oil ritual survived. The Greek Church retained the custom of anointing for restoration; the Roman Church retained the ritual of oil, not for restoration, but for the salvation of the soul, when the body is ill beyond hope of restoration. This is a perversion of original intent and clearly a "corrupt following of the Apostles."

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them.

Though the word "sacraments" is in the plural number, it seems that it can here have reference only to the Eucharist, as baptism is not such a sacrament as can be gazed upon or carried about. The mass in the Roman Church is often a gorgeous spectacular affair. The Article condemns the elevation of the host, and the superstitious adoration paid to it. The word "host," which signifies victim, is used of Christ present on the altar under the species of bread and wine, or of the consecrated bread, which is lifted up, elevated, shown to the people, gazed upon, and worshiped. There is no authority of Scripture or of ancient usage for the carrying about of the Eucharist or for making a show of the emblems of the broken body of Christ; such pompous processions as are sometimes seen in this connection are inconsistent with the simplicity and spiritual nature of Christian ordinances.

And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation.

"There is nothing ordained by him [Christ] for the permanent observance of his people," says Pope, "which is not accompanied by the Holy Ghost, and made the channel of its own appropriate grace. The rites of Christianity have their concomitant benedictions; and are never

without them, save to such as bring no preparation of faith, the absence of which makes all religion a mere ceremonial."¹

Sacraments contain no vital force or efficacy; they are not physical but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship. Unless they are performed as God requires they are unprofitable, for all receive not the grace of God who receive the sacrament of his grace.

Self-examination and prayer should precede the reception of the emblems of the broken body and shed blood of the Saviour. Reverence of manner, a thoughtful mind, a believing heart, and a steadfast purpose to serve Christ with fidelity should characterize every communicant.

But they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as Saint Paul saith.

"For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body. For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep" (1 Cor. 11. 29, 30, R. V.). Disrespect for, or negligence of, the Holy Communion indicates a lack of faith, love, and spirituality that tends to moral and spiritual weakness, if it bring not in some form the judgments of God.

¹Theology, vol. iii, p. 109.

ARTICLE XVII

OF BAPTISM

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was framed by the English Reformers, and in its first form appeared as the twenty-eighth of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. In 1562 a final clause was added: "as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." In this form it came into the English Prayer Book in 1571, where it still remains unchanged. The added clause was omitted, and the Article otherwise abridged, by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

The original purpose of the Article was to state the view held by the Anglican Church, and to condemn the teaching of the Anabaptists, who held unscriptural views of baptism and denied the rite to infants and young children. It also rejected views held by the Zwinglians and Socinians, who taught that baptism was nothing more than a badge or sign of profession. In reference to these Calvin wrote: "Wherefore those who have imagined that baptism is nothing else than a badge and mark by which we profess our religion before men, as soldiers bear the insignia of their commander for a mark of their profession, have not considered that which is the principal thing in baptism, that is, that it ought to be received by us with

this promise, 'Whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.'"¹

Wesley's retention of the final sentence indicates that the Methodist Episcopal Church holds infant baptism to be the normal type of the rite.

III. THE EXPOSITION

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth.

Baptism as a religious rite is older than Christianity. It was practiced by the Jews and is frequently alluded to in the New Testament (Heb. 9. 10). Proselytes received into the Jewish Church were first catechised, then circumcised, then baptized. Whole families, men, women, and children, were received, and in each case baptism was an essential part of the ceremony of admission. It was adopted by Christ and made a sacrament of the New Testament, an initiatory rite to the Christian Church, and the sign and seal of great promises and blessings. It bears the same relation to the new covenant that circumcision bore to the old. Circumcision was enjoined and received in testimony of a promised Saviour; baptism is enjoined and received in testimony of a salvation provided and enjoyed. "The Church of God in Christ," says Pope, "has been one through all ages: the ancients believed in the Seed that should come to whom the promise was made, and were circumcised, they and their children; we believe in the Christ who has come, and are baptized, we and our children."²

The making of the covenant between God and Abraham was the beginning of a new epoch in the history of

¹ Institutes, vol. iv, p. 25.

² Theology, vol. iii, pp. 320, 321.

God's Church on earth; it assumed a more visible and compact form than in earlier patriarchal times. In that covenant God expressly commanded the admission of infants to his visible Church; he appointed circumcision as the initiatory rite, and determined to whom it should be applied. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. . . . And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. . . . And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17. 10-13).

Circumcision was not merely an initiatory rite; it conveyed important spiritual lessons which have their counterpart in baptism. It indicated the merciful disposition of God toward his sinful creatures, and held out the promise of justification by faith alone to every penitent offender. It represented the cleansing away of the pollution of sin, the pardon of actual offenses, and the admission of the believer to covenant relations with God. This spiritual signification is alluded to by Saint Paul: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2. 28, 29). It was the sign also of the peculiar relation of the Hebrew people to God. "Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked" (Deut. 10. 15, 16).

All these lessons are taught and these blessings promised, in the new covenant, to every believer in Christ, and baptism is their sign and seal. As a perpetual sacrament it is a constant manifestation of the mercy of God in the remission of sins; it is an initiatory rite to covenant relations with God, the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," and a sign of peculiar relations to God as his people. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; . . . which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2. 9, 10).

Baptism, as a sign of profession and mark of difference from the unbaptized, implies the belief and obligations that go with it. It sets no physical mark upon the recipient. The baptismal covenant requires a solemn renunciation of "the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that we will not follow nor be led by them." It also requires a positive declaration of belief in the Triune God, and all the solemn verities of the New Testament. This renunciation of the evil and acceptance of the good is a distinguishing mark of the Christian profession. It makes persons of all nationalities and conditions in life one in Jesus Christ, fellow citizens in the "kingdom of God." "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12. 13). The spiritual baptism, of which that of water is a type, sanctifies the whole body into one holy Church.

There is one particular in which baptism exceeds circumcision as a sign and pledge of blessing and the bestowal of spiritual power. It is a foregleam of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in his fullness upon all believers. It is in itself a natural symbol of the descent of the heavenly gift. The baptism of John was a Jewish bap-

tism. He stood at the threshold of the new dispensation but was not permitted to enter it. He was the forerunner of the Messiah; his baptism was a preparation for the coming baptism. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3. 11). John's baptism "had special reference to the Holy Spirit, which was not to be administered by him, but by Christ who should come after him. This gift only honored John's baptism once, in the extraordinary case of our Lord; but it constantly followed upon the baptism administered by the apostles of Christ, after his ascension, and the sending of 'the promise of the Father.'"¹ "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ" (Titus 3. 5, 6).

It is difficult to explain the connection between the outward rite and the inward spiritual change, or, more precisely, the water used and the Holy Ghost who alone can regenerate. The writings of the Church fathers indicate some tendency to regard baptism, or its effect, as magical. Their views, however, are not clearly defined. Augustine gave a more exact definition of baptism than anyone who preceded him. He insisted strongly on the uselessness of the external sign without the internal blessing of the Spirit, but taught that the Spirit comes through the Church, which is the body of Christ. The Church in Augustine's thought was not an invisible body, but in a peculiarly external and physical way was the body of Christ through which all spiritual influences must come to the soul of man. The entrance to the Church was through baptism, which rite he taught was necessary to

¹ Watson, Institutes, vol. ii, p. 627.

salvation. His teachings were afterward modified so as to concede the salvation of those who confessed Christ and died as martyrs before they had opportunity to be baptized. To further widen the door baptism by laymen, heretics, and nurses was recognized as valid. The Augustinian doctrine was developed by the Schoolmen and is the substance of the teaching of the Church of Rome on this subject in modern times.

It was always held theoretically that the grace given in baptism was conferred by the Holy Spirit. The action of the Spirit, however, was so inseparably connected with the performance of the rite that the external ceremony was held to be full warrant for the inward spiritual presence and power. So the Schoolmen denied any proper efficacy to the symbol employed in the sacrament of baptism; yet still its power of communicating grace instrumentally was strongly asserted. Illustration was drawn from the manner in which any instrument of art performed its work. The artist was properly the executor of the work, as the designer of the result; the instrument executed it, according to its adaptation as an instrument to produce the result.

It was held, therefore, that in baptism grace was conferred *ex opere operato*, by which the Romanists mean that the sacrament is efficacious in itself by virtue of its operation, without reference to the fitness or unfitness of the recipient. The definition of a sacrament in the Roman catechism, based upon the decrees of the Council of Trent, is in exact accordance with this view: "A sacrament is a sensible thing which by God's appointment has virtue both to signify and to work holiness and righteousness."

The actual benefits of baptism supposed to come in this way were freedom from original sin, the forgiveness of all sin committed before baptism, and the implanting of

a new spiritual life, a life that could only be slain by a deadly sin.¹

The divines of the Church of England taught the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, both of infants and adults, with some caution and modifications. "We are not washed from our sins by the water, but by the precious blood of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, that lieth in the sacrament. . . . For this cause are infants baptized, because they are born in sin, and cannot become spiritual but by this new birth of the water and the Spirit."² "Baptism is infallibly efficacious as to this particular, that is, to the remission of all sins committed before the administration of the sacrament."³ "In baptism the blessings of regeneration are not only represented, but are also conveyed to the recipient. The word 'regeneration' is expanded in the Church catechism into 'a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness,' and explained in the following words: 'For being by nature born in sin and the children of wrath we are hereby made the children of grace.'"⁴

Upon this subject Wesley's views during his long life changed in a great degree. Whatever his belief was in his early years, in his later life he did not teach this doctrine. In his abridgment of Article XXV (Methodist Article XVI) he omitted the words "sure witnesses, and effectual," thereby indicating his nonacceptance of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. More than forty years before this he wrote: "It is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against

¹ See McClintock and Strong, article "Baptismal Regeneration."

² Jewell on the Sacraments, p. 253.

³ Pearson on the Creed, Article IX.

⁴ Gibson on the Articles, p. 623.

this that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years."¹

When he wrote his *Treatise on Baptism* (1756) he seemed to be in accord with the doctrine of his Church so far as it regarded the effect of baptism upon infants: "Our Church ascribes no greater virtue to baptism than Christ himself has done. Nor does she ascribe it to the outward washing, but to the inward grace, which added thereto makes it a sacrament. Herein a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit of God by long-continued wickedness. In consequence of our being made children of God, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. . . . Herein we receive a title to, and an earnest of, a 'kingdom which cannot be moved.' Baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel: supposing this, as it admits us into the Church here, so into glory hereafter."² Twenty-eight years later, when he abridged the Articles, his views in many particulars were modified; the expressions used in his treatise on baptism, which favor the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, must be interpreted by the last explanatory sentence: "Baptism doth now save us, if we live answerable thereto; if we repent, believe, and obey the gospel."

It is evident that the formularies of the Church of England teach regeneration to be the special grace of baptism in adults who believe and in all infants. But there are two views of the doctrine which have always had supporters: first, that which supposes a renewal of the soul of the infant, or an infusion of a new life; and, secondly, that which regards the new birth in infants a

¹ Works, vol. i, p. 405.

² Ibid., vol. vi, p. 15.

change of relation only, by which they are translated into the kingdom of grace; meaning adoption rather than regeneration, and something different from conversion.

Kidd states it as follows: "As our ordinary birth is not dependent on ourselves, so our regeneration, or new birth, is God's act; whereas conversion, or the surrender of the will to God, is, though prompted by his grace (John 6. 44), in a real and inalienable sense, ours. Again, as at birth we receive our ordinary life, so at baptism we receive the gift of spiritual life. Regeneration thus effects a spiritual change in our condition, and that in a moment; but conversion is a moral change, which may indeed appear in a moment, as in the conversion of Saint Paul (Acts 9), but may equally be the work of a lifetime, during which Christ is being formed in us (Gal. 4. 19), as we may suppose was the case with Saint John."¹

The Wesleyan view of the grace bestowed in baptism has been clearly stated by Richard Watson, one of the ablest exponents of Methodist theology: Baptism introduces the adult believer into the covenant of grace and the Church of Christ; and is the seal, the pledge, to him on the part of God, of the fulfillment of all its provisions, in time and in eternity; while, on his part, he takes upon himself the obligations of steadfast faith and obedience. To the infant it is a visible reception into the same covenant and Church—a pledge of acceptance through Christ—the bestowment of a title to all grace which the child is capable of receiving, and as may be sought when the period of reason and choice shall arrive. It conveys also the present "blessing" of Christ. It secures the gift of the Holy Spirit by which the actual regeneration of those children who die in infancy is effected; and the influ-

¹ On the Articles, vol. ii, p. 223.

ences which are a seed of life in those who are spared, to prepare them for instruction in the Word of God, as they are taught by parental care; to incline their will and affections to good and maintain in them the war against evil, so that they may be divinely assisted to make their calling sure. It is both to infants and adults the sign and pledge of that inward grace which flows from a covenant relation to each of the three *persons* in whose *one name* they are baptized: acceptance by the Father; union with Christ, as the head of his mystical body, the Church; and the communion of the Holy Ghost. To these advantages must be added the respect which God bears to the believing act of the parents, and to their solemn prayers on the occasion, in both which the child is interested as well as in that solemn engagement of the parents which the rite necessarily implies, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.¹

As to the efficacy of this sacrament the Methodist Episcopal Church stands between two extremes. It avoids the Roman and High-Church views of sacramental regeneration; and on the other hand it rejects the Socinian and Zwinglian view that baptism is neither an instrument nor a seal of grace but simply a ceremony of initiation into Church membership.

The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

The practice of infant baptism had its rise in early Christian times; we may justly infer for many reasons that it arose in the apostolic age. It is said by some that as the baptism of infants is not enjoined in the New Testament they are not proper subjects of that Christian ordinance. It must be conceded that there are some

¹ Abridged from Watson, *Institutes*, vol. ii, pp. 646, 647.

things in Christian practice and observance that are not commanded in the Scriptures and yet are consonant with them. The silence of Scripture can be construed to indicate the practice in New Testament times. The words of Christ in its institution are very general: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." There is nothing in this to exclude infants; and it should be interpreted with reference to the general attitude of Christ toward children, and the relation they sustained to the Jewish Church. The command of Christ does not specifically mention either adults or infants, males or females, but manifestly embraces all. It can only be limited by the fitness or unfitness of the subject. It should not be forced upon the unwilling, nor given to the profane, impenitent, or unbelieving, but it should be extended to all believers in Christ, to real penitents and seekers who receive the Scriptures, the testimony of believers in regard to Christ, and who are looking for the witness of the Spirit to justification and adoption; and it should be administered to young children or infants.

"If it were not so I would have told you," may be applied to this subject without any violent wresting of the Scriptures. The exclusion of children from the benefits of the new covenant would have been a change so novel, so great to the Jewish mind, that the Saviour must have necessarily given some prohibitory command on the subject to have made it effective.

It is easy to see the attitude of Jesus toward children. Every recorded instance in which he came in contact with them shows his deep and affectionate interest in them, and his high estimate of their moral condition. The disciples came to Jesus with the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" "And Jesus called a

little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18. 2-4).

This simple act was a beautiful object lesson, conveying to successive generations an imperishable religious truth; only the humble and self-denying can enter the kingdom of heaven; and the lowliest of all shall be the greatest of all. "It was a new thought that Jesus put into the minds of men that day; a seed-thought which had in it the promise, not only of all that appreciation of child-life which is characteristic of Christendom to-day, but also of that appreciation of the broadly human, as distinguished from the mere accidents of birth, rank, or wealth, which lies at the foundation of all Christian civilization."¹ Those who deal kindly with children deal kindly with Christ; he identifies himself with each separate little one: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." A grand security for the rights and privileges of children; and it imparts a dignity to teaching which no earthly monarch can bestow.

The Pastor of Hermas, one of the oldest fragments of Christian literature, contains a beautiful allusion to children. It seems like an echo of the Saviour's voice as he taught his disciples humility and purity by the little child who was set in the midst of them: "All of you then, who shall remain steadfast, and be as children, without doing evil, will be more honored than all who have been previously mentioned; for all infants are honorable before God, and are the first persons with him. Blessed, then, are ye who put away wickedness from yourselves, and

¹ J. M. Gibson, Commentary, in loco.

put on innocence.”¹ “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them” (Mark 10. 14, 16).

This incident has a deeper significance than merely to show the fondness of Jesus for little children; it is a designation of the place of children in the kingdom of God; an assertion that they are no more to be excluded from the Church of the New Testament than they were from that of the Old. The reception which Jesus gave them, and his warm words of welcome, may be regarded as the charter of their rights and privileges under the gospel. One privilege is admission into the visible Church of Christ by the initiatory rite instituted by the Son of God himself. We cannot consistently deny an entrance into the Church of Christ on earth to those of whom the Saviour said, “Of such is the kingdom of God.”

There are some allusions to children in this connection in the writings of Paul and in the book of Acts. “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Cor. 7. 14). It must be understood that the words “sanctified,” “holy,” “unholy,” “unclean,” have no reference to moral quality or condition, but to ritualistic holiness or unholiness. The word “holy” has two generic significations in the Scriptures. Anything consecrated or set apart to the service of God, as the vessels of the temple, is holy; beings who are free from sin, as the angels of God, are holy. Here the word is used as it is applied to the vessels of the temple. The child of a Christian mother and a pagan father was entitled to Christian baptism as a con-

¹ The Pastor of Hermas, book iii, chap. xxix.

secration to God. "Under the Christian dispensation all children, being under the common atonement, have an equal right to baptism. They stand in a common justification and salvability, which baptism now, as circumcision of old, does not create, but *recognizes*, holding the infant as a virtual believer. The child of Christian parents is here called holy in the same sense that the child of the Jews was holy, namely, as providential heir, and probable recipient of the consecrating ordinances of the Church."¹

Peter's declaration at Pentecost included children: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2. 38, 39).

The covenant made with Abraham was to him and his seed. "And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him" (Gen. 17. 19). The old covenant had merged into the new, and was now so enlarged as to embrace "as many as the Lord our God shall call" by his gospel.

There are several instances in which the apostles or their helpers baptized whole families. "And a certain woman named Lydia . . . was baptized, and her household" (Acts 16. 14, 15). If we take the phrase "and her household" in its ordinary meaning it would include children. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and his family were baptized. He was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house." Peter "commanded them

¹ Whedon, in loco.

to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10. 2, 44-48). Also the family of the jailer at Philippi: "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straight-way" (Acts 16. 33). Paul says, "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. 1. 16).

Here are four families selected as examples, and we may justly infer there were many others. Families without children are exceptions to the rule. The natural inference is that there were children under parental authority baptized with their parents.

Children are alluded to as Church members in the New Testament as well as in the Old. Paul gives special instruction to them to render to parents obedience and honor, that they may inherit the promise of long life; and instructs the parents, "Provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6. 4; Col. 3. 21).

That infant baptism was practiced in the primitive Church the writings of the early Church fathers show clearly:

Justin Martyr, whose birth was near the time of Saint John's death, says in his Apology that among the members of the Church in his day "there were many of both sexes, some sixty, and some seventy years old, who were made disciples to Christ in their infancy." The word which he uses (*ἐμαθητεύθησαν*) is the very one used by the Saviour in his commission, "Go ye, and make disciples of all nations." Justin regarded the command of the Saviour as applicable to children. He says: "And we who have approached God through him (Christ), have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision. . . . And we have received it through baptism."¹

¹ Dialogue with Trypho, chap. xliii.

Irenæus, a pupil of Polycarp, who was a disciple of Saint John, gives testimony that reaches very near to the apostles. He was born within the first half of the second century. He says of Jesus Christ, "For he came to save all through means of himself—all, I say, who through him are born again to God—infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men." It is certain that the words "born again to God" (*renascuntur in Deum*) have reference to baptism. In another place he says Jesus gave his disciples "the power of regeneration unto God."¹ The best scholarship regards this as the statement of a valuable fact as to infant baptism in the primitive Church. None but baptized persons were called "regenerate" by the early Church fathers.

Tertullian, born about the middle of the second century, advises the delay of infant baptism, but his reference to it indicates its prevalence: "And so, according to the circumstances and disposition, and even the age of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable, principally, however, in the case of little children."²

Origen, born of Christian parents about eighty-five years after the death of Saint John, who knew quite well the usages of the Christian Church in his own and in the preceding generation, says: "There was a tradition in the Church, received from the apostles, that children also ought to be baptized. For those to whom the divine mysteries were intrusted well knew that the contaminations of sin were really found in all, which ought to be removed by water and the Spirit."³

¹ Against Heresies, book ii, chap. xxii; book iii, chap. xvii.

² On Baptism, chap. xviii. Tertullian believed that baptism washed away all past sins, and that sin after baptism was most dangerous to the soul's salvation, if not unpardonable. He therefore advised that baptism be deferred in the case of infants, and young people and others, "where the ground of temptation is prepared." "If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay." For more than a century after his age many prominent Christians, carried away by this superstition, postponed baptism until the close of life. The quotation in this chapter from the Apostolical Constitutions alludes to this error.

³ Commentary, Rom. 6. 5-7.

Cyprian, who flourished about 250 A. D., gives this testimony: "Dearest brother, this was our opinion in council, that by us no one ought to be hindered from baptism and from the grace of God, who is merciful and kind and loving to all. Which, since it is to be observed and maintained in respect of all, we think is to be even more observed in respect of infants and newly born persons, who on this very account deserve more from our help."¹

The Apostolical Constitutions, which date back to the third or fourth century, have the following: "But he that says, When I am dying I will be baptized, lest I should sin and defile my baptism, is ignorant of God, and forgetful of his own nature. For 'do not thou delay to turn unto the Lord, for thou knowest not what the next day will bring forth.' Do you also baptize your infants, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of God. For says he, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.'"²

Augustine discussed the matter in his letter number xcvi in A. D. 408. He says, "The whole Church practices infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but was always in use," and that its propriety was never denied.

Pelagius, contemporary with Augustine, maintained that he "never heard of anyone, even the most impious heretic, who asserted that infants are not to be baptized."

From these quotations it can be readily seen that for the first four hundred years of the Christian Church infant baptism was not denied. In the nature of the case, the first converts were adult Jews and pagans, but the children went with the parents. If it had not been the

¹ Epistle lviii, 6.

² Book vi, chap. xv.

practice of the apostles and their successors, it could not have been introduced later without controversy, and of such controversy there is no record. The conclusion is inevitable that infant baptism has been the continued practice of the Church from the days of Christ until now, and that it will prevail to the end of time.

ARTICLE XVIII

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.¹

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article, written by the English Reformers, first appeared as the twenty-ninth of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. It then contained the following argument: "The body of one and the selfsame man cannot be at one and the same time in divers places, but must needs be in some one certain place; therefore the body of Christ cannot be present at one time in many divers places.

¹A singular change was made in Article XVIII. By a misprint the word "scriptural" displaced the word "spiritual." It occurred in 1803, and was corrected in 1844.

And because Christ was taken up into heaven, and there shall continue to the end of the world, a faithful man ought not either to believe or openly to confess the real and bodily presence of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper." This was supposed to favor too much the views of Zwingli and his followers, and in 1562 it was expunged, when the Article took its present form. It passed into the Thirty-nine Articles in 1571. It was adopted by Wesley without abridgment.

II. THE AIM

The purpose of the Article was to condemn the various and opposing doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper, to properly define its nature, and to safeguard its administration as a holy rite. It is directed first against the Zwinglian doctrine of the sacrament, as being but a partial and inadequate statement of the nature and purpose of the Eucharist, and second against the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation. These two doctrines are at opposite poles of belief and represent the two extremes of error.

The doctrine of transubstantiation had been taught for centuries before the Reformation, and was accepted in its grossest form by the Roman Church. The fourth Lateran Council, in 1215, defined the term "transubstantiation" as follows: "There is only one universal Church, beyond which no man can in any way be saved; in which Jesus Christ is himself the priest and sacrifice, whose body and blood are really contained in the sacrament of the altar, under the form of bread and wine, being *transubstantiated*, the bread into the body and the wine into the blood, by divine power." "The change effected by transubstantiation is declared to be so perfect and complete that, by connection and concomitance, the soul and

divinity of Christ coexist with his flesh and blood under the species of bread and wine; and thus the elements, and every particle thereof, contain Christ whole and entire—divinity, humanity, soul, body, and blood, with all their component parts. Nothing remains of the bread and wine except the accidents. The whole God and man Christ Jesus is contained in the bread and wine, and in every particle of the bread and every drop of the wine.”¹

The formularies of the Church of England in the reign of Henry VIII maintained the doctrine. In 1550 the partisans of the Roman Church were satisfied with the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, because, “Touching the truth of the very presence of Christ’s most precious body and blood in the sacrament, there was as much spoken in that book as might be desired.”

The question of the exact nature and means of the communicant’s participation—whether he partakes of Christ’s body and blood literally or figuratively—became, however, one of the storm centers of the Reformation. The tenth Article of the Augsburg Confession reads: “In regard to the Lord’s Supper they teach that the body and blood of Christ are actually present under the emblem of bread and wine, and are dispensed to the communicants.” While the German Reformers agreed to this statement, they differed as to the mode of the presence of Christ in the sacrament.

To transubstantiation Luther opposed a doctrine known as consubstantiation. This is regarded by some as a resort to a modified form of transubstantiation in order to avoid antagonizing the prejudice or conviction in the public mind in favor of the Roman theory of the “real presence.” Luther was not given to compromise with Rome, and no doubt he was fully persuaded that his the-

¹ McClintock and Strong, article “Transubstantiation.”

ory was true. He insisted upon the literal interpretation of the words of institution of the Supper, and as a consequence upon the actual reception with the mouth of the glorified body of Christ present in the bread, and of his real blood in the cup. He thought that, accordingly, no change takes place in the bread or in the wine, but that with, and by means of, the consecrated elements the true body and blood of Christ are communicated to the recipient. It is not held that Christ is present in that form nor with those properties which belonged to the Saviour's body on earth, such as visibility and tangibility (for these it no longer possesses), but present with the new and elevated properties which now belong to its glorified state.

The Swiss Reformers, in their bitter opposition to the doctrine of the real presence, went to the opposite extreme. The view held by Zwingli and his followers is that there is no presence of the human nature of Christ of any kind in the Lord's Supper, nor any peculiar spiritual influence connected with this ordinance other than that accompanying the truths which it symbolically represents. The opinions of the early English Reformers, Cranmer and Ridley, leaned toward the views of Zwingli, if they did not wholly indorse them, as is seen in the original form of the Article, but the formularies adopted by them in the reign of Edward were changed in the time of Elizabeth, when Cranmer and Ridley had won the crown of martyrdom.

The framers of the Article chose the true middle course between extremes, condemning error while asserting a spiritual real presence and communion of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. Their further object was to declare unmistakably that certain practices in the Church of Rome in relation to the Eucharist have no foundation in the ordinances of Christ.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper has always occupied a most important place in the Christian Church, and is the most sacred and divine of all God's ordinances. In the Scriptures and in ecclesiastical literature it has been designated by a variety of names :

1. *The Breaking of Bread* (Acts 2. 42). The name is derived from the action of our Lord. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples" (Matt. 26. 26). This has from the first, in imitation of our Lord, formed a part of the sacramental celebration. The breaking of the bread is considered by many a significant act, essential to the proper performance of the rite. It was designed by our Lord to shadow forth the wounding, piercing, and breaking of his body on the cross; all of which was necessary to the making of a full atonement for the sin of the world.

2. *The Eucharist*. This signifies the giving of thanks, and was the name most in use in the primitive Church. Justin Martyr says: "And this food is called among us the Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins."¹ The word in this connection comes from its use by Jesus in the institution of the sacrament: "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them" (Matt. 26. 27). The word is scriptural, primitive, and well expresses the character of the sacrament as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

3. *The Communion*. In ordinary terms, a sharing, an agreement when several persons join and partake of one thing; hence properly applied to the celebration of the

¹ First Apology, 66.

Lord's Supper. In the Christian sense it signifies the sharing divine converse or intercourse (1 John 1. 3), and as this takes place, sacramentally, in the Lord's Supper, the word signifies a joint participation in a spiritual sense of the body and blood of Christ, that is (John 6. 63), of his spirit in that sacrament.

4. *The Mass* (Latin, *missa*). This name was given to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper long before the Reformation, and was widely used in the Western Church. Its origin is not certainly known, and its derivation is a matter of conjecture. Many sources have been suggested. The theory now generally accepted is that it is derived from the phrase used by the deacon at the dismissal of the catechumens, "Ite, missa est." The name has no doctrinal significance, but as it has been used by the Church of Rome to the exclusion of all other names it is generally associated with her doctrines.

5. *The Lord's Supper*. The only passage in the New Testament where this expression occurs is 1 Cor. 11. 20. It is there used in connection with the *agape*, or love feast, with which at that early period it was joined. As a title of the sacrament it dates from the time of the Reformation. The tenth Article of the Augsburg Confession is entitled "Of the Lord's Supper," and from that most of the formularies of the period adopted the title. In the English Church the rite was first called "the sacrament of the altar." The idea of a sacrifice and an altar had not yet been eliminated. Later it was called "the Eucharist," but in the reign of Edward VI "Lord's Supper" was given as a title. That and "the Holy Communion" are the names now used in the Church of England. "The Lord's Supper" is the title given the sacrament in the formula of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in all other branches of Methodism.

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another.

The Article admits that the sacrament is a sign of love; it does not characterize the sacramentarian view, in this respect, as false, but inadequate. The lesson of humility and love was taught by the Saviour in the washing of his disciples' feet at the time of the institution of the sacramental Supper. Their contention for precedence was a painful indication of ambition and pride; elements of character that unfitted them for the solemn events of the coming night. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God," girded himself with a towel, and washed his disciples' feet. In full consciousness of his dignity and divine origin he performed this menial function, as a reproof of their strife, and a lesson of humility and peace. He made the application, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13. 3, 15).

The Holy Communion is incompatible with pride and strife. It is in remembrance of the supreme act of the Son of God, inspired by a love which in depth and intensity can have no parallel. It had its inception in love: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3. 16); and equally so was its execution: "I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10. 15-18). So also must be its fruit in us: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John 4. 11). In accordance with this is the invitation, "Ye that . . . are in love and charity with your neighbors . . . draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort."

But rather is a Sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death.

The Passover was superseded by the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Several particulars are common to both. They were divinely appointed as memorials of deliverance. One prefigured the death of Christ, the other represents it as past. Circumcision was a prerequisite of one, baptism of the other. The Passover was obligatory until Christ's sacrifice; the sacramental Supper is to be observed to "show the Lord's death till he come." The old covenant passed away, and the new became the bond between God and his people.

The history and design of the Passover become intensely interesting in connection with the Christian institution. Among the judgments of God that fell upon the Egyptians none was more severe than the death of their firstborn. "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die" (Exod. II. 4, 5). To distinguish their dwellings, and as a condition of deliverance, the children of Israel were commanded to kill a lamb and sprinkle the blood upon the doorposts of the house, so that the destroying angel might *pass over* the houses of all who were obedient to the command. By this the firstborn of the children of Israel were preserved, and it led to the deliverance of the whole nation, and to a more definite and distinct form of the visible Church of God. In commemoration of their deliverance, and the singular sign by which it was obtained, the feast of the Passover was instituted to be observed annually. It was domestic and religious. A lamb was provided for each house, which was slain by the priest, and the blood poured under the altar. The lamb was then eaten by the people in their tents and houses. The head of every family took the cup of thanks-

giving and gave thanks with his family to the God of Israel.

It is easy to imagine the scene in the room in Jerusalem where Jesus and his disciples were assembled to keep the Passover. Jesus was the head, the disciples were the subordinate members of his family. "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. 12. 50). As soon as Jesus had finished the ceremonial feast he proceeded to inaugurate another, new and distinct, that was to be perpetuated in the place of the Passover. "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22. 19, 20). It is expressed by Matthew thus: "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 27, 28).

Jesus kept the feast of the Passover; he knew the paschal lamb slain prefigured his own death, and that the Passover feast then being observed was the last that could ever be validly celebrated; that he himself, as the Lamb of God, would be slain, a sacrifice for the sins of the world. The analogy between the paschal lamb and Christ can be easily traced. The pure paschal lamb without spot signified Christ, the effusion of the lamb's blood signified the effusion of Christ's blood, the salvation of the children of Israel from temporal death by the lamb's blood signified our salvation from eternal death by Christ's blood.

The sacramental Supper was a memorial of his death. It was more significant than the Passover; it has a higher

object than the commemoration of an historical fact related to one nation. It commemorates the greatest fact in the moral history of the world; a fact that made a distinct epoch in the history of the Church, and ushered in a new dispensation of the grace of God. It embraced in its scope the entire race, and brought within its redemptive and atoning power all men in every condition of life and in every period of time.

The sacrament was also a visible sign and seal on the part of Him who made the covenant that it was established in, and ratified by, the sacrificial death of Christ. It is God's pledge to man to redeem and save; to purify and bring to eternal glory the believing soul that enters into this covenant. It is the solemn pledge of the believer, who is the other contracting party to this covenant, to love, obey, and serve God all the days of his life.

Insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

The word "rightly" refers to the proper administration of the ordinances. It is important that the administrator be ordained to that work; one solemnly set apart in due form according to the rules and regulations of that branch of the Christian Church which called him into its ministry. The sacred rites pertaining to the Holy Communion must not be usurped by those unauthorized; they may be taken only by those called thereto by the voice of the Church and the Spirit of God. To consecrate the elements of bread and wine, to represent the broken body and the shed blood of the incarnate Son of God, is a sacred work, even in the lowest sense of a memorial of his death. Especially is this true in the higher sense of the spiritual presence when "the body of Christ is

given, taken, and eaten after a heavenly and spiritual manner."

The Methodist Episcopal Church reserves the privilege and duty of consecrating the elements for the sacrament to the elder alone, who, after being elected by his brethren, is ordained by the bishop, and authorized in the following words: "Take thou authority as an elder in the Church, to preach the Word of God, and to administer the Holy Sacraments in the congregation." The administrator should act with becoming reverence; hurry, or the omission of important parts of any prescribed form, is unseemly. Everything should be done with solemnity, but with a cheerful spirit. It is a eucharistic feast, a giving of thanks for present salvation, and the hope of eternal life.

The word "worthily" refers to the recipient. It behooves every communicant to obey the apostolic injunction, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (2 Cor. 13. 5). There can be no better preparation for the Lord's Supper than self-examination and prayer. Baptism being the initiatory rite to the Christian Church, it would be the natural order in Christian practice that baptism should precede the Lord's Supper. Those who have surrendered themselves to Christ, and accepted him as a personal Saviour, will desire to associate themselves with other Christians and will enter the visible Church.

The law relating to the Passover said, "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof" (Exod. 12. 48). We have no such positive command in relation to the Lord's Supper, but apostolic example and the practice of the primitive Church indicate what should be the general, if not the exclusive, rule: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. . . . And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in break-

ing of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 41, 42). If a proper opportunity for baptism had not been offered an adult believer, and his heart is right with God, and with pure intent he should participate in the Lord's Supper, the act would not be sinful or the sacrament invalid, but the act should not be unnecessarily repeated.

As to the state of the heart or the moral character the administrator has no power to judge. "One's own conscience is best for choosing accurately or shunning. And its firm foundation is a right life, with suitable instruction."¹ The Church itself has decided who shall be invited: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbors, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort; and, devoutly kneeling, make your humble confession to Almighty God."

With this holy sacrament "rightly" administered and "worthily" received "with faith," "the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ."

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture.

To support the theory of transubstantiation the Romanists point to the words of institution, "This is my body"; but the words furnish no proof or ground for such inference. It is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture. While the bread was in Christ's hand, and the wine was in the cup, he said, "This is my body," "This is my blood." If this be taken in the literal sense, he held his

¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, chap. i.

own body in his hand and his blood in the cup while it was still coursing in his veins.

It is folly to say this is a mystery. Why should it be so regarded? It pertains to a piece of bread, a cup of wine, and a human body. God can do all things that can be done, but not a flat contradiction. He cannot make a thing to be this and not be this at the same time; to be here and elsewhere at the same moment. If we understand that the broken bread represented his broken body, and the wine his shed blood, as the slain lamb represented the Passover, the mystery vanishes.

Methodist divines have thoroughly discussed this subject. Wesley says: "No such change of the substance of the bread into the substance of Christ's body can be inferred from our Saviour's words, 'This is my body' (Matt. 26. 26), for it is not said, 'This is *turned* into my body,' but 'This *is* my body'; which, if it be taken literally, would rather prove the substance of the bread to be his body. Therefore Cardinal Cajetan acknowledges it is nowhere said in the gospel that the bread is changed into the body of Christ; but they have it from the authority of the Church." Again: "If every particle of the host is as much the whole body of Christ as the whole host is before it is divided, then a whole may be divided into wholes; for, divide it and subdivide it, it is still whole. Whole it is before the division, whole it is in the division, and whole it is after it. Thus unreasonable as well as false is the doctrine of transubstantiation."¹

The Saviour's own words are an exposition of the words of institution: "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6. 55, 56). Because the disciples misunderstood the say-

¹ Works, vol. v, pp. 788, 789.

ing, he gave them this exposition: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6. 63).

The truth which underlies this discourse of Christ is the basis of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. "Here the thought is clothed in symbolical words; there it is clothed in symbolical objects and actions."¹

The writings of the early Church fathers indicate that they knew nothing of transubstantiation. They called the elements the figures, the signs, the symbols, the types, the representation, the commemoration, and the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ. The very terms they employ demonstrate that they did not consider the elements the very substance of Christ's body and blood.

When the enemies of the Christians heard that the divine communion was the body and blood of Christ they imagined that it was actually flesh and blood. This the martyrs denied, though tortured to be made to declare it was true.² Theophilus of Antioch, complaining of the false accusations laid against the Christians, says: "And most impious and barbarous of all, that we eat human flesh."³ Concerning the statement Dr. Marcus Dods observes: "The body of Christ is human flesh. If, then, it had been the primitive doctrine that the bread and wine cease to exist in the Eucharist, and are changed into natural flesh and blood, our author could not have resented this charge as 'most impious and barbarous.'"

Clement of Alexandria wrote: "The blood of the Lord is twofold. For there is the blood of his flesh, by which we are redeemed from corruption; and the spiritual, that by which we are anointed. And to drink the

¹ Whedon, in loco.

² Irenæus, Fragment xiii.

³ Theophilus to Autolykus, book iii, chap. iv.

blood of Jesus is to become partaker of the Lord's immortality; the Spirit being the energetic principle of the Word, as blood is of flesh." He speaks of the Eucharist as an ordinance of "renown and glorious grace," and of those who partake of it in faith as "being sanctified both in body and soul."¹

Tertullian, to expound the spiritual thing which gives life, points to the text, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." "We ought therefore," he says, "to desire Him in order that we may have life, and to devour him with the ear, and to ruminate on him with the understanding, and to digest him by faith."²

Clement thought that in the Eucharist we should give some exercise to reason. "The Saviour, taking the bread, first spake and blessed. Then breaking the bread he presented it, that we might eat it, according to reason, and that knowing the Scriptures we might walk obediently."³

There are but few traces, indeed, of any controversy on the subject of the Lord's Supper for the first eight centuries. Gibson says that the first known writer of a formal treatise on the subject was Paschasius Radbert of Corbie in 831, and in his work, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*, "a carnal theory involving practically the destruction and annihilation of the elements was boldly taught."⁴ This theory was defended by others and gradually became popular. It was asserted that after the consecration the bread and wine are the true body and blood of Christ in such a way that they are "sensibly," not only sacramentally, but really, handled by the priest, "broken and ground by the teeth of the faithful."

This view was not accepted without opposition. The work of Paschasius was answered, among others, by

¹ The Instructor, book ii, chap. ii.
² Stromata, book i, chap. x.

³ Resurrection of the Flesh, chap. xxxvii.
⁴ On the Articles, p. 650.

Ratramnus in a work entitled *Liber de Corpore et Sanguine Domini*. This was a defense of pure symbolical sacramental doctrine. A change, he held, occurred in the Eucharist, but not a real, perceivable one; it is the act of faith by the recipient which makes bread and wine the spiritual food and drink of the body and blood of Christ. Seven centuries later this book largely influenced the minds of Ridley and Cranmer and laid the foundation of this Article.

The Schoolmen of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries endeavored to free the doctrine of much of its revolting carnal aspect, but did not succeed, at least to the mind of the common people. Their view may be thus stated: They maintain that there is a transforming power in the words of consecration, producing a change in the substance of the elements while the accidents of bread and wine—the taste, color, weight, smell, and such other qualities—remain; they hold that the substance of one thing may be changed for the substance of another, while the accidents remain. When objection is made that this is opposed to sense, the Romanists reply that our outward senses are not deceived in the accidents of bread and wine, but that they are deceived in the substance that is covered by the accidents. To this Jeremy Taylor replied: "If we are to judge of a substance by the accidents, and if these represent a wrong substance, then the sense is deceived all the same, by the sign of the false substance, and all the articles of our faith which rely on the verity of our Lord's nature could not be believed." Cranmer himself wrote: "If once we admit this doctrine, then no credit can be given to our senses. We open a large field, and give a great occasion to an innumerable host of heinous heresies." "The substance of the body of Christ," writes Hooker, "hath no presence, neither can have, but

only local. It is not everywhere seen, nor did everywhere suffer death; everywhere it could not be entombed, it is not everywhere now, being exalted unto heaven."

For all these centuries the Roman Church has been blind to spiritual truth; being committed to the doctrine of infallibility, the absurdities accepted in the dark ages are now perpetuated, and her eyes are closed to the light of Scripture and reason. When the question of reform was agitated she spurned the Reformers. The Council of Trent sanctioned and confirmed the scholastic theory of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and declared:

"After the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very Man, is verily, really, and substantially contained under the species of these sensible objects; that it is a sin to endeavor to put a metaphorical sense upon the words in which our Lord instituted the Holy Sacrament, that the Church had always believed the actual body and the actual blood, together with his soul and his divinity, to be present under the species of bread and wine after consecration."

"If anyone shall deny that in the sacrament of the most holy Eucharist are verily, really, and substantially contained the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently whole Christ, but shall say that he is only therein as in a sign, or in figure or virtue, let him be anathema."

"If anyone shall say that in the sacred and holy sacrament of the Eucharist the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of Christ, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the form only of the bread and wine remaining, which conversion indeed

the Catholic Church most aptly calls transubstantiation, let him be anathema.”¹

This doctrine, which cannot be proved by the Word of God, is an article of faith in the Roman Church to-day.

Overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament.

In a sacrament it is necessary that there be some outward sign representing spiritual grace, whereas, if the bread be really changed into the body of Christ, there is no outward sign at all in the sacrament, there being nothing but the body and blood of Christ, which are not signs, but the thing signified.

And hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The literature of the Roman Church, its lives of the saints, and the written history of many local churches have more or less of the miraculous narrated in them, and often these features are connected with the doctrine of transubstantiation. The festival of Corpus Christi (body of Christ) had its origin in a pretended miraculous revelation from heaven; and the story of the miracle which came to the priest at Bolsena who did not believe in transubstantiation gives evidence of gross superstition. It is alleged that when attending his priestly duties drops of blood fell upon his surplice, and when he endeavored to conceal them in the folds of his garment they formed bloody images of the sacred host! By this he professed to be convinced of the truth of the doctrine.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

“What the nature of this presence is,” says Mosheim, the celebrated Lutheran divine, “we know not; the thing itself we know, but the mode of its truth is a mystery

¹ Sess. XIII.

which we cannot comprehend. We deny that Christ is present and received in a physical or material manner, but should anyone ask, How is he present? our answer is, We know not. We commonly call his presence in this holy ordinance a 'sacramental presence.' This might seem to be an attempt to define the mode of his presence; but by this word we mean nothing more than that we are ignorant of the mode."

The view held by many theologians of Europe and America at the present time is that there is no presence of the glorified human nature of Christ, nor anything supernatural or mysterious in the Eucharist; that the bread and wine are merely symbolic representations of the Saviour's absent body by which we are reminded of his sufferings, but that there is a peculiar and special spiritual blessing bestowed by the Saviour on all worthy communicants by which faith and all Christian graces are confirmed.

Calvin occupied a middle position between that of Luther and Zwingli. His views are given by the distinguished German Brettschneider: "Calvin's spiritual reception of the body and blood of Christ is indeed a real but not an oral one, and consists in this, that in the moment in which we partake of the bread and wine, if our hearts are by faith elevated to him, a supernatural influence emanates from the substance of the glorified body of Christ (that is and remains in heaven) by which the soul of the believer is animated and strengthened in a mysterious manner. But the unbeliever receives nothing more than bread and wine."¹

This view was widely accepted in England; it was held by Richard Hooker, the ablest divine in the Anglican Church of his century. His conclusion is thus expressed:

¹ See Schmucker, *Elements of Theology*, p. 253.

"The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament." The Church of England was committed to the view of the Lord's Supper as expressed in the third paragraph: "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith."

Bishop Browne connects the Calvinian view with the English Church. He says the doctrine of a real spiritual presence is the doctrine of the English Church, and was the doctrine of Calvin and of many foreign reformers. But English exponents of the Articles differ from Calvin in one respect. He taught that bread and wine are symbols or representations to which no presence of Christ is attached, yet that those who receive in faith do really partake of the body and blood of Christ simultaneously with the bread and wine; but that the real spiritual presence is not in the bread and wine, but emanates from the substance of the glorified body of Christ which is in heaven.

The Church of England holds to the real presence but does not define the mode. Bishop Moberly says: "The body and blood of Christ are present, not corporeally but spiritually, in and with the elements. We know no more. . . . Consubstantiation, like transubstantiation, is a *theory* of the manner of the Presence, whereas the Church only knows the Presence as a fact, respecting the manner and mode and extent of which she is not informed."¹

In the opinion of Methodist divines, however, that view of the sacrament which reduces it to a mere religious commemoration of the death of Christ, with the addition

¹ Bampton Lectures, p. 172; Gibson on the Articles, p. 663.

that it has a natural fitness to produce religious emotions and to strengthen and confirm faith, nevertheless falls short of the whole truth; it is only a partial statement of the nature and benefit of the Lord's Supper.

The twenty-eighth Article of the Church of England is the eighteenth of the Methodist Episcopal Church, adopted without addition or abridgment, but Anglican and Methodist divines differ in its interpretation. English exponents emphasize the word "given" as though it had special significance in this connection. "The body of Christ is not said in a general way to be 'received,' but to be 'given, taken, and eaten'; as if there were a solicitude in correcting the abuses of the sacrament, explicitly to maintain the union between the heavenly and spiritual blessing and the outward and visible signs. To use these precise expressions, therefore, respecting the body of Christ is by clearest implication to combine that heavenly and spiritual blessing with the given and taken symbol. The words of the whole paragraph imply that the Presence is what is now called 'objective,' that is, that it is there in virtue of consecration, as something external to ourselves, in no way dependent on our feeling or perception of it."¹

In that case some change takes place in the elements, or some spiritual force is added thereto "in virtue of consecration." If the theory of Rome and that of Luther are properly rejected, why should anything approaching these be adopted? The words of the Saviour in the institution of the ordinance, and the words in the Article, can be interpreted without supposing any mysterious power in the words of consecration, or the impartation of any spiritual power or virtue, through them, to the elements. "Jesus took bread, and blessed it." In the

¹ Knox, *Essays*, vol. ii, p. 173; Gibson, p. 661.

Authorized Version the word "it" is supplied; in the Revised Version it is omitted.

Dr. Adam Clarke says: "Both Saint Matthew and Saint Mark use the word *ευλογησας*, *blessed*, instead of *ευχαρισησας*, *gave thanks*, which is the word used by Saint Luke and Saint Paul. The terms, in this case, are nearly of the same import, as both blessing and giving thanks were used on these occasions. But what was it that our Lord blessed? Not the bread, though many think the contrary, being deceived by the word *it*, which is improperly supplied in our version. In all the four places referred to above, whether the word 'blessed' or 'gave thanks' is used, it refers not to the bread, but to God the dispenser of every good."¹ The Prayer of Consecration, so called, contains no petition or words of blessing on the bread or wine.

In the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, "Hear us, O merciful Father," introduced the prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the elements; but this, not being in accord with the principles of the Reformation, was displaced in 1553 by the prayer for the communicants: "Hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood."

Christ himself selected and consecrated bread and wine as the visible emblems of his most precious body and blood. Whenever these are set apart by God's people for this holy sacrament, and administered, the influence of God's Holy Spirit will accompany them. Dr. R. J. Cooke gives succinctly the view of the Methodist Episco-

¹ The Eucharist, p. 56.

pal Church: "Bread is bread, wine is wine; but to the eye of faith, which looks through the material and the earthly to the spiritual and the heavenly, these elements, by Christ's own words, are received figuratively as the body and blood of Christ. The real presence is not in the elements, but in the soul of him who worthily partakes of the elements."¹

It is understood that in this holy sacrament there is a partaking of the body and blood of Christ; that there is on the part of God a real application, and on the part of every worthy communicant a real participation, of the merits or benefits of the great atonement. To partake of the broken body and the shed blood of Christ literally is impossible, but by an easy figure it is understood to mean the partaking, by the exercise of a living faith, the atonement which Christ made for us by his death on the cross. So "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith."

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

The practices of the Church of Rome in its abuse of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are here alluded to. In mediæval times the consecrated element, or host, was reserved and held sacred for various purposes. It was worn around the neck in a small locket in time of danger; held in the hand when undergoing the ordeal of fire, or buried with the dead. The elements, changed into the real body and blood of Christ, his soul and his divinity, became an object of worship. The host was carried in procession on Palm Sunday, placed in a sepulcher on

¹ History of the Ritual, p. 251.

Good Friday, and carried in procession on Easter Day. At the feast of Corpus Christi the procession of the host was the principal observance. The elevation of the host is the lifting of the consecrated elements to the gaze of the people for their adoration and worship. This practice was authorized in the thirteenth century, was prevalent in pre-Reformation times, and occupies a prominent place in the celebration of the mass in the Church of Rome to-day.

These evils drew forth the protest of the Reformers, which was met by the confirmation of the practices by the Council of Trent and its anathema on those who deny their lawfulness.¹ The decrees of the Council show plainly the importance of the assertion that these practices are not founded on the ordinances of Christ, and that they are not now obsolete. What is not by the ordinance of God is by the invention of men. It is a perversion of the Article not to regard its words as condemnatory and prohibitory of the practices. The English expositors of the Article do not so interpret it. It has been shown that they teach a real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the elements concurrent with the Prayer of Consecration, but "after a spiritual and heavenly manner." They lay stress on the fact that the presence is attached to the sign by virtue of the act of consecration, and is not consequent upon the act of communion. From this follows their interpretation of the Article: "Adoration of Christ present in the sacrament is not, and cannot be, prohibited. But it is one thing to worship Christ there present, and quite another to find in the sacrament a distinct localized object of worship."² "The Article does not say the practices are wholly to be condemned. . . . Not that worship is not due the Divine Person of

¹ See Council of Trent, Sess. XIII.

² Gibson on the Articles, p. 667.

our Lord wherever he is present, whether in accordance with his promise in the sacrament or by his ascension at the right hand of the Father.”¹ “The Reformers had no intention of refusing worship to Christ present in the sacrament. Christ present in the sacrament is to be worshipped, for, as God (and the Manhood has been taken into God) worship is due him, under whatever conditions he manifests himself. The worship is not directed to the outward sign, the substance of bread and wine; it is obvious that no adoration ought to be done unto the sacramental bread and wine bodily received.”² These quotations show divergence from the Article.

The Church of England has for nearly a century past failed to antagonize the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and turned its back upon the doctrines of the Reformation, especially in relation to the Holy Communion. It seeks to change its classic literature to make it accord with its changed views. Keble in his *Christian Year* wrote:

O come to our communion feast;
There present in the heart,
Not in the hands, th’ eternal Priest
Will his true Self impart.³

Thus it appeared until 1866, then “Not in the hands,” was changed to “As in the hands.” When Keble wrote he did not believe in the “real objective presence”; that is a modern view in the Church of England, and the lines are made to include it.

When the Prayer of Consecration is believed to bring the real presence of the glorified Christ into the bread and wine, and it is elevated to the gaze of the people for

¹ Kidd on the Articles, vol. ii, p. 234.

² Green on the Articles, p. 238. The question has been raised whether the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the “real objective presence,” with its subsequent doctrines of sacrifice and worship, can be lawfully taught in the Church of England, and was ruled affirmatively by the Judicial committee in the Bennett case. See Dollinger’s *Lectures on the Reunion of the Churches*, p. 131.

³ Found in the Section for “Gunpowder Treason.”

their adoration, it will be difficult for them to distinguish between the practices of the English clergyman and those of the Roman priest. Adoration of Christ in the elements comes dangerously near to idolatry. Why not direct the mind up to the Christ at the right hand of God, rather than to the Christ supposed to be in the elements? We look through nature up to nature's God without worshiping God in the flower or tree. So we can look through the elements, which represent Christ, up to the Son of God now glorified, and feel in our hearts the cleansing, strengthening power of the Holy Ghost.

The Anglican Prayer of Consecration and that of the Methodist Episcopal Church are identical; so are the Articles "Of the Lord's Supper." The Methodist Episcopal Church believes in the real spiritual presence of the glorified Son of God in the heart of every worthy communicant, concurrent with the reception of the emblems of his broken body and shed blood; that by the Holy Spirit the benefits of the atonement are applied, and the believer rejoices in a knowledge of the remission of sin, and by faith feeds on Christ in his heart with thanksgiving.

ARTICLE XIX

OF BOTH KINDS

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay People; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was prepared by Archbishop Parker, of the English Church, in 1562. It was laid before the Convocation and accepted, and has kept its place in the Thirty-nine Articles until the present time. It was adopted by Wesley without change.

II. THE AIM

Its object was to condemn the practice of the Church of Rome in withholding the wine from the laity in the Holy Communion. This custom was not known in the primitive Church, nor did it prevail before the twelfth century. Cardinal Bona says: "The faithful always and in all places, from the first beginning of the Church till the twelfth century, were used to communicate under the species of bread and wine, and the use of the chalice began little by little to drop away in the beginning of the century, and many bishops forbade it to the people to avoid the risk of irreverence and spilling."¹

When the custom began of denying the wine to the laity it was severely condemned by the Popes as "a human and novel institution." The Council of Clermont in 1095 condemned it. The twenty-eighth canon says

¹ Quoted by Gibson, *Thirty-nine Articles*, p. 677.

that "no one shall communicate at the altar unless he receive the body and the blood separately and alike, unless by the way of necessity and for caution." Notwithstanding, however, that the practice was condemned by the authority of the Church, it spread rapidly and widely. In the latter half of the fourteenth century it was one of the great abuses of the Church. This was one of the corruptions of popery so much complained of by Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome of Prague.

When the Council of Constance assembled in 1414 it was thought the evil would be condemned. Instead of condemning, the Council approved, justified, and enjoined it as the law of the Church. "On the fourteenth day of June, 1415, the assembled fathers passed the famous decree which took the cup from the laity in the celebration of the Eucharist, ordered that the Lord's Supper should be received by them in one kind, that is, the bread, and vigorously prohibited the communion in both kinds."¹ The ignominy of the action is intensified by the fact that the early Reformers, who complained of this withholding from the faithful of what they claimed as a portion of their birthright, were also condemned. The ashes, writings, and memory of Wickliffe were branded with infamy by a decree of the Council; John Huss was burned at the stake, and a year later Jerome of Prague was martyred.

The erroneous practice was the outgrowth of the doctrine of transubstantiation; it was the fruit of a superstitious fear that the wine, the real blood of Christ, might be spilled by carelessness or accident, and thereby great indignity and evil be wrought.

The same doctrine naturally led to that of concomitance. Inasmuch as the elements were wholly changed

¹ Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, Cent. XV, part ii, chap. ii.

into the substance of Christ, therefore the whole Christ, body and blood, was contained in either element; and hence if only one element was received, Christ was fully received under that one element.

This doctrine was fully asserted by the Council of Trent at its thirteenth session (October, 1551): "Jesus Christ is entire under the species of bread, and under the smallest particle of that species, as also under the species of wine, and under the smallest portion of it."

In conformity with this doctrine three canons were read: 1. Against those who maintain that all the faithful are under obligation to receive in both kinds. 2. Against those who maintain that the Church has not sufficient grounds for refusing the cup to the laity. 3. Against those who deny that our Lord is received entire under each species.

The Council anathematized any who should say that "by the precept of God, or by the necessity of salvation, all and each of the faithful of Christ ought to receive both species of the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist."

The Article, written a year later, may be regarded as a reply to the challenge.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the Lay People; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper as instituted by Christ was duly observed in the early Christian Church both in substance and form. The words of institution are explicit: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks,

and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26. 26-28).

The "all" refers to the company of disciples. "Drink from it, all of you; for this is my covenant blood."¹ There is no word or act that indicates or implies that the cup was withheld from the laity.

The words of institution show a twofold consecration: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it"; "And he took the cup, and gave thanks"—a separate blessing or giving of thanks for each. The action of passing the elements to the disciples was twofold: of the bread, he "gave it to the disciples"; of the cup, he "gave it to them." The direction was twofold: "Take, eat; this is my body"; "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament."

The thought is carried forward into the Epistles of Saint Paul. His words clearly show that he intended that all alike, clergy and laity, should receive the sacrament in both kinds: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (I Cor. 11. 28).

A few instances are found in the New Testament where the "breaking of bread" is mentioned alone. It is not certain that these are allusions to the sacrament, and if they are may be easily explained, for by a figure common to Eastern nations bread stands for all that belongs to a meal.

Citations can be made from the early Church fathers that indicate the practice of the Church in the several centuries. The words of Justin Martyr are conclusive for the second century: "Those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread

¹ Twentieth Century Testament.

and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.”¹

The words of Cyprian answer for the third century: “I have been admonished that, in offering the cup, the tradition of the Lord must be observed, and that nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf, as that the cup which is offered in remembrance of him shall be offered mingled with wine.”²

For the fourth century we have the testimony of Cyril of Jerusalem: “Then, after having partaken of the body of Christ, approach also to the cup of his blood. . . . Be thou hallowed by partaking also of the blood of Christ.”³

It is unnecessary to make further quotations from the fathers, since the Church of Rome admits the early participation of the laity in both elements of the sacrament.

The antiquity of a custom cannot make that custom right, neither can the decrees of Councils or the edicts of Popes establish and make binding what is contrary to the Word of God. A privilege granted by Christ cannot be justly annulled by the Church. At the time of the Reformation the wine was restored to the laity by all Protestant Churches, but the Roman Church clung to its error. Further consideration of the matter was promised, and some things were referred to the Pope. Some exceptions have been made by special dispensations, but the great body of the Roman Church remains to this day bound by the decrees of the Council of Trent.

¹ First Apology, chap. lxv.

² Epistle lxii.

³ Cat. Myst., v, 22.

ARTICLE XX

OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST, FINISHED UPON THE CROSS

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article, composed by the English Reformers, first appeared as the thirtieth of the Forty-two Articles of 1553. The subject treated is the same as in Article III, Part II, of the Augsburg Confession, but has no close verbal agreement with it. A few alterations were made in 1562, since which time it has remained unchanged. It was adopted entire by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

The purpose of the Article was, in setting forth the perfect character and completeness of Christ's sacrifice, to condemn and reject certain false conceptions and current theories of the eucharistic sacrifice.

The opinion prevailed in mediæval times that Christ by his sufferings and death satisfied the demand of justice for original sin, and the mass was instituted, in which might be made an oblation for daily sins both mortal and venial. The Article condemns this theory wholly,

carefully specifying the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice for both "original" and "actual" guilt.

The doctrine of the mass was an outgrowth of the error of transubstantiation. Masses were sold and became a source of trade and of ill-gotten gain to the Church. "A small piece of money became their price," says Bishop Burnet; "so that a profane sort of simony was set up, and the holiest of all the institutions of the Christian religion was exposed for sale. Therefore we in cutting off all this, and in bringing the sacrament to be, according to its first institution, a communion, have followed the words of our Saviour, and the constant practice of the whole Church for the first ten centuries."¹

III. THE EXPOSITION

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone.

Herein is a clear statement of the doctrine of the atonement. The phraseology is similar to that used in the Prayer of Consecration in the communion service: "Who made there, by his oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

This is based upon the Scriptures: "They truly were priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, . . . who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Heb. 7. 23-27). The apostle having observed that the Jewish high

¹ On the Articles.

priest entered into "the Holiest of all" "once every year, not without blood" (Heb. 9. 3, 7), adds that Christ, "neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (verse 12). And again, "Christ is not entered into the holy places, . . . that he should offer himself often, . . . but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (verses 24-28).

The apostle has made the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ *once offered* very emphatic. Christ is not offered *once every year*, not *daily*, not *often*, but *once for all*, and he by offering himself *obtained eternal salvation for us*.

The sacrifices offered under the Mosaic law were imperfect, and their repetition was demanded, but could "never take away sins"; but Christ, "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God. . . . For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10. 11-14). Christ has obtained by his own atoning blood remission for our sins, and "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (verse 18); therefore we may "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (verse 22). There is no defect in the sacrifice, the atonement is perfect; if there is no defect in our faith there will be none in our salvation.

In the primitive Church the Eucharist was a commemorative, but not a propitiatory, sacrifice. The early Christians were reproached by the heathen because their religion had no altars or sacrifices, and they never de-

fended themselves by saying they had a sacrifice in the propitiatory sense in the Eucharist. It was frequently called "a pure and unbloody sacrifice," and was thus distinguished from the bloody sacrifices of the Jews. It thus appears that the Eucharist was, by the fathers, considered a representation of the great sacrifice made by Christ once for all.

Augustine says: "The Hebrews, in their animal sacrifices which they offered to God, . . . typified the sacrifice offered by Christ. This sacrifice is also commemorated by Christians in the sacred offering and participation of the body and blood of Christ."¹

The early Church fathers frequently spoke of the Eucharist as an offering or sacrifice, but only in the sense that praise and thanksgiving are called sacrifices. All proper sacrifices are offerings made to God, but they differ in nature. Prayer, praise, thanksgiving, repentance, and acts of charity are all called sacrifices in the Scriptures. This is recognized in the order for the administration of the Lord's Supper as used by Episcopalians and Methodists: "We thy humble servants desire thy Fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving."

In the Eucharist there is an offering made of bread and wine, sometimes called oblations, and of alms; there is also the reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice of ourselves, our bodies and our souls, to God.

The dominant idea among Methodists has been that of a real and necessary atonement in Christ, while the idea of its nature has not been so definitely presented. It is all that is required by God, and is coextensive with the wants of mankind. "Wesleyan Arminianism has ever been true to the fact of an atonement in Christ. In her

¹ Reply to Faustus, book xx, chap. xviii.

hymns and prayers, in her utterances of a living Christian experience, in her sermons and exhortations, this great fact ever receives the fullest recognition. In her soteriology 'Christ is all and in all.'"¹

Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

The truth of the first paragraph of the Article being established, this is a logical conclusion. This condemnation is severe, but not more so than the offense deserves. The doctrine condemned is a fiction, a fabrication, it has no foundation in Scripture. It is blasphemous because it contradicts the plain teaching of the Word of God, which teaches that Christ was offered as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Romanists claim that the mass may be offered for the sins of the living and the dead, and remission of guilt and pain be thus obtained; but Scripture declares, "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9. 22). They define it as "a sacrifice without the effusion of blood." It cannot, therefore, be an expiatory sacrifice. It dishonors Christ by denying the sufficiency of the sacrifice which he offered of himself on the cross "once for all," and providing another supplementary to it.

The Roman Church strengthened and deepened its error ten years after the framing of this Article in a series of decrees formulated by the Council of Trent (1563) and published in nine chapters. It declared: "As the same Jesus Christ who once offered himself upon the cross with the shedding of his blood is contained and immolated without the effusion of blood in the holy sacrifice of the mass, this latter sacrifice is truly

¹ Miley on Atonement, p. 209.

propitiatory, and by it all obtain mercy and forgiveness; since it is the same Jesus Christ who was offered upon the cross who is still offered by the ministry of his priests, the only difference being in the manner of offering. And the mass may be offered, not only for the sins and wants of the faithful, who are alive, but also for those who, being dead, are not yet made pure." Anathemas were pronounced against all who affirmed the opposite of the decrees. "Whosoever shall affirm that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or a bare commemoration of the sacrifice made on the cross, and not a propitiatory offering; or that it only benefits him who receives it, and ought not to be offered for the living and the dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be accursed."¹

This is a dangerous deceit, inasmuch as it holds out an easy method of obtaining pardon and leads men to place their hope of salvation upon a false foundation.

¹ Sess. XXII.

ARTICLE XXI

OF THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS

The Ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

I. THE ORIGIN

The first part of this Article, which was composed by the English Reformers, appeared in 1553, as follows: "Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded to vow the estate of single life without marriage, neither by God's law are they compelled to abstain from matrimony." In 1562 this was recast and the second part was added. As the Reformation advanced the conviction that the marriage of the clergy was lawful had become stronger. The Article of 1553 had merely stated negatively that no divine command could be urged against it; the addition declared positively that it is lawful. In 1571 it passed into the Book of Common Prayer, and with a few verbal changes was adopted by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

A disparaging view of the married relation by men who aspired to or professed peculiar sanctity is more ancient than Christianity. The Essenes, a Jewish sect, well known in the time of Christ, were celibates. Their doctrines and practices are described by Hippolytus (170-236 A. D.), who says: "These practice a more devotional life, being filled with mutual love, and being temperate.

And they turn away from every act of inordinate desire, being averse even to hearing of things of the sort. And they renounce matrimony, but they take the boys of others and thus have an offspring begotten for them.”¹

It is possible, or even probable, that the tenets and practices of the Essenes influenced the early Christians, by whom, almost from the beginning, the estate of celibacy was held in high esteem. Widows, monks, and nuns who took the vows of celibacy were considered to be embracing a higher mode of life, but for the first three centuries of the Christian era there was no enforced celibacy known in the Church of Christ. In the fourth century, however, the Church adopted the doctrine of devils spoken of by Saint Paul as “forbidding to marry” (1 Tim. 4. 3). The earliest ecclesiastical legislation on the subject was at the Spanish Council of Elvira (A. D. 305), which commanded ecclesiastics who were married to separate from their wives, thus ruthlessly putting asunder those whom God had joined. The Synod of Ancyra, held a few years later, reversed this decree, and the sixth apostolic canon says, “Let not a bishop, a priest, or a deacon cast off his own wife under pretense of piety; but if he does cast her off, let him be suspended. If he go on in it, let him be deprived.”

The conflict of opinions can be traced in the writings of the fathers and the enactments of the Councils. Not all at once did this pernicious ascetic principle prevail, but it steadily gained. The Council of Neo-Cæsarea (A. D. 314), held immediately after that of Ancyra, enjoined in its first canon the degradation of priests who marry after ordination. So the great Council of Nice (A. D. 325) proposed a canon enjoining continence upon the married clergy. The aged Bishop Paphnutius, how-

¹ Refutation of Heresies, book ix, chap. xiii.

ever, warmly opposed the imposition of such a yoke, and prevailed, so that the proposal fell to the ground. "Marriage is the true chastity," exclaimed the good old bishop, and in this single sentence uttered a living truth, which, received and held, would have prevented a vast amount of sin and contributed to the purity and prosperity of the Church through all the ages.¹

The Trullan Council, held at Constantinople (A. D. 692), declared that priests and deacons might live with their wives, as the laity do, according to the ancient custom and ordinance of the apostles. To this decision the Eastern Church has adhered, allowing priests and deacons to live in marriage; only a priest living in celibacy, however, may be chosen a bishop. The Western Church, by its Popes, made many attempts to enforce the rule of celibacy upon the priesthood. The idea formed a part of the great scheme of Gregory VII (Hildebrand) for the reorganization of the Church. The conflict continued for more than a thousand years, so that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the rule demanding celibacy of the priesthood was almost universally enforced in the Western Church. This was a grievous yoke intolerable to be borne, the prolific source of abominable vices, and early in the sixteenth century Reformers of every school of thought were agreed on the necessity of some relaxation of the rule.

The Augsburg Confession (Part II, Article II) claimed freedom for the clergy to marry on the ground of (1) the law of God, which no man can alter; (2) the custom of the primitive Church; and (3) the impure single life of the clergy which had followed the absolute prohibition of their marriage.² Luther married a nun, and in Eng-

¹ This subject is discussed at length in my *Deaconesses, Ancient and Modern*, chap. ix.

² See Schmucker, *Elements of Theology*, p. 339, and Green on the Articles, p. 265.

land Cranmer married before the Church had changed its rule or Parliament had authorized it by law. In 1547, soon after the accession of Edward VI, a large Convocation agreed to the following: "That all such canons, laws, statutes, decrees, usages, customs, heretofore made, had, or used, that forbid any person to contract matrimony, or condemn matrimony already contracted by anybody, for any vow or promise of priesthood, chastity, or widowhood, shall from henceforth cease, be utterly void, and of no effect."¹ Two years later by an act of Parliament all positive laws and canons which forbade the marriage of the clergy were repealed.

After this came the protest of the English Reformers in the Article now under consideration. By it they aimed to dispel the prejudice against the marriage of ministers, to correct the error that it was sinful or contrary to God's law, and to declare that they are as free to marry as are laymen.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The Ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage.

The Church did not obtain the idea of the greater sanctity of a life of celibacy from the teachings of our Lord or the apostles. In some instances, no doubt, passages in Saint Paul's writings in which, for special reasons, a single life is recommended were wrested from their original meaning and made to teach what was foreign to the intent of the apostle, but by no fair interpretation can they be made to approve celibacy for men or women consecrated to the service of God.

The qualifications for the ministry as given by Saint Paul have in view a married ministry. "A bishop then

¹ Stryple's Cranmer, book ii, chap. iv; Gibson on the Articles, p. 703.

must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. 3. 2). Whatever interpretation is given to this; whether a requirement of marriage or a prohibition of polygamy or of deuterogamy, it is conclusive against enforced celibacy. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest . . . appoint elders in every city, as I gave thee charge; if any man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having children that believe" (Titus 1. 5, 6, R. V.). "Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well" (1 Tim. 3. 12). Paul claims for himself the "right"—if he did not exercise it—"to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas" (1 Cor. 9. 5, R. V.). These texts are conclusive. The Scriptures cannot contradict themselves.

"The Lord best knows what human nature is; and he had otherwise determined for his ministers than that they should want the salutary and softening influences of domestic life; and here we come to a decisive instance in which, the explicit law of God being violently and without shame contradicted and set aside by the decisions of the Church, a choice must be made between the two authorities."¹

"Marriage is honorable in all" (Heb. 13. 4). This is a good foundation for the marriage of the clergy; they must be included in the *all* for whom it is honorable. "Let this state," says Dr. Clarke, "be highly esteemed as one of God's own instituting, and as highly calculated to produce the best interests of mankind. This may have been said against the opinions of the Essenes, called Therapeutæ, who held marriage in little repute, and totally abstained from it themselves as a state of comparative

¹ Isaac Taylor, *Ancient Christianity*, p. 523.

imperfection. At the same time it shows the absurdity of the popish tenet that marriage in the clergy is both dishonorable and sinful; which is, in fact, in opposition to the apostle, who says marriage is honorable in all; and to the institution of God, which evidently designed that every male and female should be united in this holy bond; and to nature, which in every part of the habitable world has produced men and women in due proportion to each other.”¹

Peter, the chiefest of the apostles, and according to the papists the first Pope, was a married man, conclusive evidence that marriage is no hindrance to virtue. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him,” one answering to his need (Gen. 2. 18). Celibacy is not good; God declares it, and the history of the Church verifies it. Theophylact says, “Those who pretend to say that the single state is more holy than the other slander their Maker, and say in effect, ‘We are too holy to keep the commandments of God.’ ”

Therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

This paragraph of the Article is a just inference from the first. If there is nothing in the law of God that requires the celibacy of the ministry it should not be imposed upon them by any rule of discipline enacted by ecclesiastical authorities. By doing so the Church exceeds the power intrusted to it by Christ, its great Head.

There is abundant evidence that a married ministry existed in apostolic times. Even by the Essenes celibate life was regarded as a special vocation, and one not to be forced upon anyone. They did not forbid their adopted

¹ Clarke, in loco.

sons to marry. Though their respect for celibacy may have affected the thought of the early Christians, it was very far from leading them to deny marriage to their clergy. Indeed, by the early Church, marriage was regarded as enjoined on bishops, elders, and deacons in the counsel of Saint Paul.

The inscriptions in the catacombs of Rome bear testimony to the marriage of all orders of the clergy. Bishops, elders, and deacons mourn for departed wives and children. "VICTOR IN PACE FILIVS EPISCOPI VICTORIS CIVITATIS VCRENSIVM—'Victor, in peace, son of Bishop Victor, of the city of the Ucrenses.' . . . Gaudentius the presbyter, for himself and his wife Severa, a chaste and most holy woman. . . . Observe also the tender recognition of family ties in the following: 'Once the happy daughter of the presbyter Gabinus, here lies Susanna, joined to her father in peace.'"¹

Throughout the whole history of the Church the celibacy of the priesthood, decreed by Synods and Councils, has been the cause of great evils. The Eastern Church, as a whole, refused to accept the practice, and in the movement of the Reformation the Anglican Church repudiated it forever. In 1553 and 1562 freedom of the clergy to marry was embodied in its Articles of Religion.

While the Anglican Church thus adapted itself to changed conditions and sentiments, the Roman Church riveted the fetters still tighter. The following is the rule binding the Roman Church at the present time: "Those that are married may not be admitted into orders; those that are admitted may not marry; and those that, being admitted, do marry, are to be separated." The Methodist Episcopal ministry has no yoke to oppress or bind it.

¹ Withrow, *Catacombs*, p. 525.

ARTICLE XXII

OF THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF CHURCHES

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed by the English Reformers. The first paragraph was taken, with a few unimportant changes, from the fifth of the Thirteen Articles of 1538; and that and the paragraph following first appeared in 1553. The third paragraph was added in 1562, being borrowed from a Latin series of twenty-four "Heads of Religion" drawn up by Bishop Parker in 1559. It passed into the Thirty-nine Articles in 1571, and with some abridgment was adopted by Wesley.

II. THE AIM

The aim of the Article was the regulation of the internal discipline and usages of the Church, which had been

the subject of vehement disputation in the reign of Edward VI.

The Church, which had begun in apostolic times with simple observances, as time passed had adopted many laborious and useless ceremonies, some appearing in one age, some in another, without any just authority. One of these was the habit peculiar to Christians of "signing themselves with the sign of the cross in all their actions and conversation, concerning which and the like Tertulian writes, 'There was no law in Scripture for them, but that tradition was their author and custom their confirmer.'"¹

The early congregations possessed many different forms and usages; the unity of the Church did not consist in uniformity of rites and ceremonies, but in a unity of faith and truth. When the Roman Pontiff arrived at universal sovereignty, however, compulsory uniformity began. Many rites and ceremonies which had come down from purely traditional sources and were popularly employed became by ecclesiastical law incumbent upon the entire body of the Christian organization. These were objected to by the Reformers, who were intent upon ridding the Church of unscriptural superfluities. Many of them they abolished; some they retained, deeming them important or suited to the needs of religious worship.

In this Article the Anglican Church justified itself in breaking away from the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Church, and declared its own fitness to determine what it should use and what discard. The Article is at the same time a condemnation of any who would violate established customs at the mere impulse of private judgment.

¹ King, *Primitive Church*, p. 270.

III. THE EXPOSITION

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word.

The rites and ceremonies of the early Church are defined by Lord King as follows:

"By rites and ceremonies I mean two different things. By rites I understand such actions as have an inseparable relation to the circumstances or manner of worship; as, for instance, the sacrament was to be received in one manner or other, but whether from the bishop or deacon, that was the rite. Lent was to be observed a certain space of time, but whether one day, or two days, or three days, that was the rite thereof. So that rites are the necessary concomitants of the circumstances of divine worship, appendages to them; or, if you rather please, you may call them circumstances themselves.

"By ceremonies I mean such actions as have no regard either to the manner or circumstances of divine worship, but the acts thereof may be performed without them; as, for instance, in some churches they gave to persons, 'when they were baptized, milk and honey.' And, 'before they prayed, they washed their hands.' Now, both these actions I call ceremonies, because they were not necessary to the discharge of those acts of divine worship unto which they were affixed."¹

In the New Testament no specific order of worship is provided; none was left on record by inspired men. As to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the only sacred rites enjoined by our Lord, there are the

¹ Primitive Church, p. 268.

words of institution given by Jesus, which are a sufficient guide to the Church in their administration.

The essentials of the two sacraments have always remained the same, but the rites connected with the administration of them have differed widely. In baptism water and the words used in its application are the essentials. The manner of its application differs, as sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. By some churches the sign of the cross is used, by others it is not. In the Eucharist bread and wine and the words of institution are the essentials; it may be received from the hands of the bishop, presbyter, or deacon. It may be received standing, sitting or kneeling. Diversities of times and men's manners have affected the ceremony somewhat. The kiss of peace is no longer given, being unsuited to the customs of the times and country.

As no form was prescribed in apostolic times, each Church was left to its own judgment, and its forms of worship were many or few according to the mind of the bishop in charge. There can easily be gathered, however, from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the epistles, some facts that indicate the parts of worship adopted in apostolic times.

1. Prayer was included. In the service that preceded the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost the disciples "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1. 14). After the holy baptism and consequent revival the converts "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2. 42).

2. It included also sacred song. So Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5. 19). "Voicing to each other.

. . . There may be allusion here to the antiphonal or responsive music.”¹

3. Thanksgiving was a part. “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5. 20).

4. Reading and expounding the Scriptures was a prominent and essential part, following the custom of the synagogue. Paul in Thessalonica, “as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures” (Acts 17. 2). In the Christian assemblies the prophesying was for “edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”

All religious ceremonies to-day are developments along these four lines. Some Protestant Churches have many rites and ceremonies, some but a few. The Methodist Episcopal Church, relatively, has few. Some that were retained by the Anglican Church were discarded by Wesley, as the use of the sign of the cross in baptism.

It has been regarded by wise and good men as providential that no trace can be found in the apostolic Church of any prescribed mode of Church government, to the exclusion of all others ; or of a creed, or catechism, or liturgy upon which superstition could seize as an invariable rule of faith and practice, and abuse to support a sanctimonious religion which should conform to the letter but disregard the spirit of the Word.²

Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

¹ Whedon, *in loco*.

² See Coleman, *Primitive Christianity*, p. 417.

Though each Church or congregation in primitive times had its own peculiar rites and ceremonies, each had disciplinary power to enforce their observance upon its own members. This was proper to avoid confusion, to unite its activities and maintain peace.

In this post-Reformation period conditions of Church life have materially changed. In early times the general Church was made up of congregations or parishes holding the essential doctrines of the Christian faith though they differed in minor observances. Now the general Church consists of different branches or denominations; aggregations of churches which hold the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith but have different forms of Church government and a variety of rites and ceremonies. Rules and regulations for Church government must be established, and an order of public worship must be provided.

The power to do this in the Methodist Episcopal Church is lodged with its General Conference and is exercised under certain constitutional limitations. The Church has power also to enforce observance of the rites and ceremonies it may adopt. The candidate for admission to membership is asked, "Will you cheerfully be governed by the rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hold sacred the ordinances of God?" The answer must be affirmative. Thus every person who unites with the Church enters into a solemn covenant with the Church as a whole. He adopts its Articles of Religion, assents to its discipline and to its rites and ceremonies, so long as they are not repugnant to the Word of God. He may at any time sever the connection, but may not inveigh against her doctrines or discipline.

The Church by her authorized agencies has prepared an order of public worship, and proper forms for the administration of the sacraments, the burial of the dead,

the reception of persons on probation and into full membership, and other public services. All these should be observed in the spirit and in the letter, by ministers and members. Most of these rites and ceremonies are administered by the ministry, who should follow with care the prescribed forms, without omissions or additions, except in things made discretionary with them.

When any man through his private judgment willingly and purposely breaks the rite or ceremony of his Church he assumes to be wiser than the constituted authority by which they were prepared, or the great body of the Church by which they are approved. The following proposition laid down by Hooker, though written more than three hundred years ago, has an application to present times and will commend itself to wise and prudent men: "Where neither the evidence of any law divine, nor the strength of any invincible argument otherwise found out by the light of reason, nor any notable public inconvenience, doth make against that which our own laws ecclesiastical have, although but newly, instituted for the ordering of these affairs, the very authority of the Church itself, at least in such cases, may give so much credit to her laws as to make their sentence touching fitness and conveniency weightier than any bare and naked conceit to the contrary; especially in them who can owe no less than childlike obedience to her that hath more than motherly power."¹

If the order of public worship or the sacramental rites were left to private judgment there could be no order, and sometimes no decency. The patience, wisdom, and authority of Saint Paul were taxed by this in the Church at Corinth. If private judgment were exercised against the decisions of the Church there could be no uniformity,

¹ See Ecclesiastical Polity, book v, chaps. vi-ix.

and the very existence of the Church as a visible society would be endangered. According to the Article, offenders against the order of the Church wound the consciences of weak brethren, and should be openly rebuked.

Great care should be taken to preserve the unity and peace of the Church. To this effect is the exhortation of Saint Paul: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1. 10).

Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

This has special reference to the time of the Reformation, but is true in every age. The Church of Rome had destroyed the distinctions of all national Churches and produced to a great extent uniformity in doctrine, ceremonial, and discipline. England threw off the yoke and established a national Church. In divesting herself of the intolerable burden of rites and ceremonies she abolished such as cast a shadow upon the truth and dimmed the glory of the gospel. She authorized others also that would tend to edification.

In the United States there is no national Church, but a number of well-organized Churches, all having equal rights and privileges. One of the largest and most thoroughly organized is the Methodist Episcopal Church. It adopted its rites and ceremonies, largely taken from the Anglican Church, with certain additions peculiar to Methodism. These additions—such as class meetings, love feasts, and watch-night services—were all of them adopted with a view to the edification and spiritual development of the members of her communion.

ARTICLE XXIII

OF THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, as the Delegates of the People, are the Rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent Nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.¹

¹ As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially of all Christian Ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and therefore it is expected that all our Preachers and People, who may be under the British or any other Government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.

I. THE ORIGIN

The abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles made by Wesley contained twenty-four Articles. The Conference of 1784, when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, added this, "Of the Rulers of the United States of America," and numbered it XXIII.

It was first printed in the Sunday Service in 1786, and was changed in 1790 by adding the words "The President," and in 1804 the phrase "the general act of confederation" was changed to "the Constitution of the United States," making the Article comport with the changes in our civil government. The note was added to the Article in 1820.

II. THE AIM

The purpose of the Article was to embody the views of the Church on the question of the right of the people of the colonies to declare themselves a sovereign and independent nation.

In the Sunday Service, or Liturgy, which Mr. Wesley prepared and sent from England for the use of the Methodists he inserted a form of "Prayer for the Supreme Rulers of the United States." "It is probable that he did not consider himself sufficiently well acquainted with our civil institutions, at that early period, to frame an 'Article' under this head, and hence the addition of this Article by the Conference of 1784, in conformity with the prayer in the Sunday Service."¹

III. THE EXPOSITION

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors and the Councils of State, as the Delegates of the People, are the Rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States.

The significance of this declaration can hardly be understood without noting the time in which it was made. It was written in the last days of 1784. The Declaration of Independence was made in 1776, and for seven years thereafter the Revolutionary War was waged. The new scheme of federal government called the Articles of Confederation was not adopted by all the colonies until 1781, and peace was not declared until 1783. It was a time of readjustment and of some uncertainty as to the status the nation would hold. The Article was written before ■

¹ Emory, *Defense of the Fathers*, sec. vii.

President was elected, and in its first form in 1784, and when first printed in 1786, "the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*," were "the rulers."

At that time there were one hundred and four itinerant preachers and eighteen thousand members. It was a wise and patriotic thing to make the declaration and adopt it as an Article of Religion. A considerable number of the citizens still adhered to the English government and were looked upon with suspicion by the patriots. It was under these conditions that the Methodist Episcopal Church declared its loyalty to the new government.

The Constitution was adopted in 1789, and on May 29 of that year, the New York Conference being in session, the bishops and leading men deemed it expedient to recognize in the name of the whole Church the new federal Constitution recently adopted, and the chief magistrate, George Washington, recently inaugurated. An address to the President was voted by the Conference, and was presented by the bishops and read by Bishop Asbury. The last sentence of the address will show the pledged loyalty of the Church, and the intensely religious spirit of the address: "We promise you our fervent prayers to the throne of grace, that God Almighty may endue you with all the graces and gifts of his Holy Spirit, that he may enable you to fill up your important station to his glory, the good of his Church, the happiness and prosperity of the United States, and the welfare of mankind. Signed in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The address was graciously received. The President's reply was in keeping with it, and its religious spirit was reciprocated. The close of his reply was as follows: "After mentioning that I trust the people of every de-

nomination, who demean themselves as good citizens, will have occasion to be convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion, I must assure you in particular that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the throne of grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community."¹

The Methodist Episcopal Church was born amid the struggles of the colonies for freedom and union, and is coeval with the birth of civil liberty and national life in these United States. The Article is its first official utterance in relation to the civil government of the country. It recognizes our republican form of government, its officers as our rulers, exercising a power delegated to them by the citizens who exercise the elective franchise—a government of the people, by the people, for the people. Thus the responsibilities of government are placed upon officers and electors. If bad men are elevated to high civil positions by the choice of the people, the people become partakers of their deeds and are responsible for their iniquitous administration.

The Scriptures are clear as to the duty of Christians in the selection of their rulers: "Thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers" (Exod. 18. 21). "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23. 3).

The relation of the Church to civil government is recognized in the Word of God. It directs that prayer be offered for rulers. In Churches where a form of prayer is prescribed there is a special form for rulers. Where prayer is offered without a prescribed form it is eminently

¹Stevens, *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. ii, pp. 502, 503.

proper that he who leads the devotions of the people should pray for those in power who control the destinies of the nation. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 2. 1-3). It is a blessing to the nation when we have rulers who appreciate the prayers of the Church of God. The immortal Lincoln said, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the Churches!"

While the Article does not say that the Church and State are two distinct and separate organizations, it presupposes this as a fundamental principle of our government. Religious liberty is accorded to every citizen. Where Church and State are united organically, unbiased, perfect religious liberty is impossible. The Church enjoins upon its members the duty of being peaceable and loyal subjects, and expects that the State will protect and sustain them in all their Church privileges, institutions, and forms of worship. Respect and confidence should be manifest between Church and State while each maintains its own prerogatives.

And the said States are a sovereign and independent Nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

The colonies had maintained their right and won their claim by seven years of war. England and all the world acknowledged them a sovereign and independent nation when the treaty of peace was signed in Paris in 1783. The colonists realized their aspirations, and rejoiced in the opportunity to work out their national destiny. As a result the world has one great continent consecrated to

civil and religious liberty, an example, a beacon of hope, and a refuge to the oppressed of the earth. The nation's possibilities are great, but no greater than her responsibilities. Having won her freedom, and established a government unique among the nations, she must be diligent to develop her resources for the good of mankind and firm to maintain her free institutions for the good of posterity. She must concede no superiority among her citizens but that of intelligence and moral worth, must never yield subjection to foreign jurisdiction of pope or potentate, acknowledging no spiritual head but Jesus Christ, and no civil ruler but a citizen elevated to the supreme place by the suffrages of his equals.

As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially of all Christian Ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be.

"The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13. 1), both civil and religious. "Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake" (Rom. 13. 5). If we do not approve the man or the administration we must be loyal and respectful. "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22. 21). None knew better than Jesus when he uttered these words that the Cæsar who then occupied the throne possessed traits of character which were anything but commendable; and yet, as an emperor, he was to be obeyed in all matters that did not contravene the divine law. Moreover, as a ruler he was to be remembered in the prayers of Christians, and provided with "tribute money" to defray the expenses of government.

Therefore it is expected that all our Preachers and

People, who may be under the British or any other Government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.

This part of the subjoined note was framed especially to meet the peculiar case of the brethren in Canada. Unfounded suspicions had been created against some of the ministers and members, because the Methodist Episcopal Church, of which they were then a part, was regarded as a foreign ecclesiastical authority.

The statement has, however, as much significance now as it ever possessed, and a much wider application. The Methodist Episcopal Church now has missionaries and missions in almost every part of the world and under every form of civil government. It is therefore important that its Book of Discipline should contain some declaration in regard to the attitude of missionaries and members toward the government under which they may be living and laboring. The latter portion of the note is of particular value as an authoritative statement by the Church of what it expects of its missionaries and their converts in any foreign country. It is calculated to disarm suspicion, if any should exist, in the minds of the civil authorities.

ARTICLE XXIV

OF CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOODS

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed by the English Reformers in 1553. It passed into the Thirty-nine Articles of 1571, and into the Methodist Sunday Service in 1784.

II. THE AIM

The original aim was to condemn the theories of the Anabaptists, which were held to a considerable extent on the continent of Europe, and to some extent promulgated in England. Special laws were enacted against them in the reign of Henry VIII.

This sect was feared and hated by the Reformers of all Europe, and its members are alluded to in many of the Confessions and documents of the period. The Belgic Confession says: "Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and all turbulent people who reject higher powers and magistrates, overthrow legal rights and judgments, make all goods common, and, in fine, abolish or confound all orders and degrees which, for uprightness' sake, God has appointed amongst men."¹

This Article, though primarily aimed at the Anabap-

¹Article XXXVI.

tists, who long since ceased to disturb Christendom, is not obsolete. Socialism and communism are likely to be disturbing forces in this twentieth century, and will demand the wisdom and forbearance of the Church and State to deal with them successfully.

III. THE EXPOSITION

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast.

The error condemned in this Article probably arose from a misinterpretation of two passages of Scripture describing the inner life of the early converts immediately after the Pentecostal baptism. "All that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need" (Acts 2. 44, 45, R. V.). "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4. 32, R. V.).

This state of things is not to be wondered at if we consider the circumstances surrounding the occurrence. The baptism of the Holy Spirit had destroyed selfishness and moved every heart with a brotherly impulse more divine than human. A large proportion of the converts were not permanent residents of Jerusalem. They had come from all quarters of the world. Under the spell of Christian fellowship they lingered at the place where the divine blessing came to them, and where the power of the Holy Ghost was still manifest in the "many wonders and signs done by the apostles." Citizens and strangers were bound together by the ties of Christian love, and "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread

from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." It was one continued series of religious services, in the Pentecostal room, in the temple, and from house to house—prayer, praise, love feast, and holy communion; business, labor, and home for the time being forgotten or sold. It was a time of intense religious excitement, a feeling of holy brotherhood and union with Christ. No doubt a strained expectation prevailed that the ascended, glorified Christ would soon appear, coming in the clouds of heaven with all his holy angels, as they had seen him go into heaven. A community of goods was a very natural thing. Why should they labor? There was enough and to spare. They preferred to spend their time in watching and waiting for the Son of God. Heaven was very near to earth, and they would have but little time to wait.

But the scene soon changed. Less of grace was found, and more of human nature. Only a few months, possibly, passed before there were found partiality and discontent. "Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 6. 1, R. V.). This communism may have been unwise, but it arose from love to each other and a firm faith in Jesus Christ. It was the proof of generous and devout spirits. It was an attempt to realize a state of brotherly equality not possible then or now. But the Christian love and enthusiasm that prompted it could not be lost though communism was a failure. It must have brought into their religious life a supernatural power, and made them more efficient as laborers in God's cause. It was at this time that "many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

A like state of things was manifest later in the church at Thessalonica when the impression prevailed that Christ was soon to appear. Business was neglected, men became idle and brought the severe reproof of the apostle: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. 3. 10-12). So also it has been in modern times when good but mistaken people prepared white robes in which to ascend to meet the Lord in the air.

No injunction in regard to the community of goods was given by the apostles. The plan arose in part to supply the needs of strangers. It was not an obligatory rule, but was entirely voluntary; not a community of ownership, but of use. This is seen in the case of Ananias: "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5. 4.) Ananias could have retained his property without blame, and still held his place in the Christian community. To have established and enforced a rule requiring a community of goods in the Christian Church would have created a social revolution contrary to the precept of Christ: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. 22. 21).

The following scriptures are unanswerably against Christian communism: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matt. 5. 42). "Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Rom. 12. 13). "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house,

he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5. 8). "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13. 16).

Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

No argument is necessary to prove that almsgiving is a Christian duty. This is shown by the words of Christ: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 6. 1). "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke 12. 33). Here a heavenly reward is implied for acts of benevolence to the poor. So also in the judgment scene which Christ brought before his apostles: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me" (Matt. 25. 35, 36).

The teaching and practice of the apostles follow and confirm those of Christ. Paul in his farewell discourse to the church at Ephesus enjoined upon its members the spirit and practice of benevolence by his own example of self-denial and the words of the Lord Jesus: "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 34, 35).

It is a beautiful custom in the Christian Church to associate the giving of alms with the Holy Communion. The

custom has come to us from apostolic times. Clement of Rome wrote, "Let the strong not despise the weak, and let the weak show respect unto the strong. Let the rich man provide for the wants of the poor; and let the poor man bless God, because he hath given him one by whom his need may be supplied."¹ So also Justin Martyr: "And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through his Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. . . . And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who need."²

An appreciation of God's great gift, which is commemorated in the Eucharist, will prompt us to liberality toward the poor. Where the benevolent spirit is wanting the love of God does not dwell. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John 3. 17.)

No duty is more earnestly inculcated in the New Testament than charity. No specific rule as to the proportion we should give is laid down, but it should be as God has prospered us. The importance attached to beneficence by Christ makes it evident that Christians should practice it to the utmost of their ability.

¹ First Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xxxviii. ² First Apology, chap. lxvii.

ARTICLE XXV

OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his Apostle; so we judge that the Christian religion does not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

I. THE ORIGIN

This Article was composed in 1553 by the English Reformers and has never been changed. It was taken by Wesley without abridgment.

II. THE AIM

It has reference to the same turbulent, disorderly factions described in Article XXIV, combating their objection to the taking of oaths for judicial purposes. Their scruples are alluded to in contemporary documents: "Moreover, neither do the Anabaptists leave the lawful use of oaths; and in this they proceed contrary to the sense of Scripture, and the examples of the fathers of the Old Testament, as well as the apostle Paul, nay, of Christ, nay, of God the Father whose oaths are often mentioned in the Sacred Writings."¹

¹ *Reformatio Legum*, chap. xv. The Society of Friends, in their refusal to take or administer an oath, as also in their objection to all war, as inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, revived the opinions of the Anabaptists. The law has been modified in their favor, and instead of making an oath in courts of justice they are allowed to make an affirmation. This privilege was first granted to the Quakers and Moravians, and now anyone objecting to take an oath has the same privilege. False affirmations are, of course, no less liable than false oaths to the penalties of perjury.

III. THE EXPOSITION

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his Apostle.

The passages of the New Testament alluded to in the Article are the following: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5. 33-37). "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James 5. 12).

Jesus and James intended to condemn and to correct an evil habit of profane swearing in common conversation. The Jews swore by a great variety of things—by heaven, by earth, by the head. The evil custom has been perpetuated. Speaking of the people of Palestine, Dr. Thomson says: "This people are fearfully profane. Everybody curses and swears when in a passion. No people that I have ever known can compare with these Orientals for profaneness in the use of the names and attributes of God. The evil habit seems inveterate and universal. . . . The people now use the very same sort of oaths that are mentioned and condemned by our Lord. They swear by the head, by their life, by heaven, and by the temple, or, what is in its place, the Church. The forms of cursing

and swearing, however, are almost infinite, and fall on the pained ear all day long.”¹

The evil practice prevails to a great extent now in Christian lands. In common conversation men swear by heaven, by Jesus, and by many other names and things. Such oaths, uttered carelessly and without intention of harm, entail guilt. “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exod. 20. 7). Profane swearing by any name the Almighty God may bear, or by any of his attributes, is a specific violation of the third commandment, and God will not hold the offender guiltless.

None of the oaths adduced by Christ as specimens are judicial oaths, and it is quite evident that in neither passage is the formal tendering of oaths in a court of justice under consideration.

So we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet’s teaching, in justice, judgment and truth.

Some such oaths are alluded to in the New Testament: “For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife” (Heb. 6. 16). There is the example of God himself: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us” (Heb. 6. 17, 18).

“The oath is a divine institution, the colloquial abuse of

¹ The Land and the Book, vol. i, p. 284.

which is forbidden by Christ as profanity. So far is this from abolishing the true oath, which is an end of all strife, the Lord's purpose was to forbid its colloquial desecration in order to secure its solemn sanctity."¹

One may properly refer to the case of the Lord himself when he was on trial before the high priest. He was solemnly adjured, that is, put on his oath, and though he had maintained silence before he did not now refuse to answer. "And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God" (a solemn adjuration which every Jew was bound to answer truly), "that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said" (Matt. 26. 63, 64). The same account is given by Mark: "I am" (Mark 14. 62). Here our Lord's action forms the best commentary upon his words. This may be taken as decisive that the words of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount have reference to "vain and rash swearing" in conversation, and not to judicial oaths. The words of James are clearly founded upon the words of our Lord. The marginal rendering in the Revised Version confirms it: "Swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let yours be the yea, yea, and the nay, nay."

The "prophet's teaching" referred to in the last clause of the Article is found in Jer. 4. 2: "And thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness; and the nations shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." These are the only conditions on which judicial oaths are permissible.

¹ Whedon, in loco.

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